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FITZ WIGGINS.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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F I T Z W I G G I N S.

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SYDENHAM," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

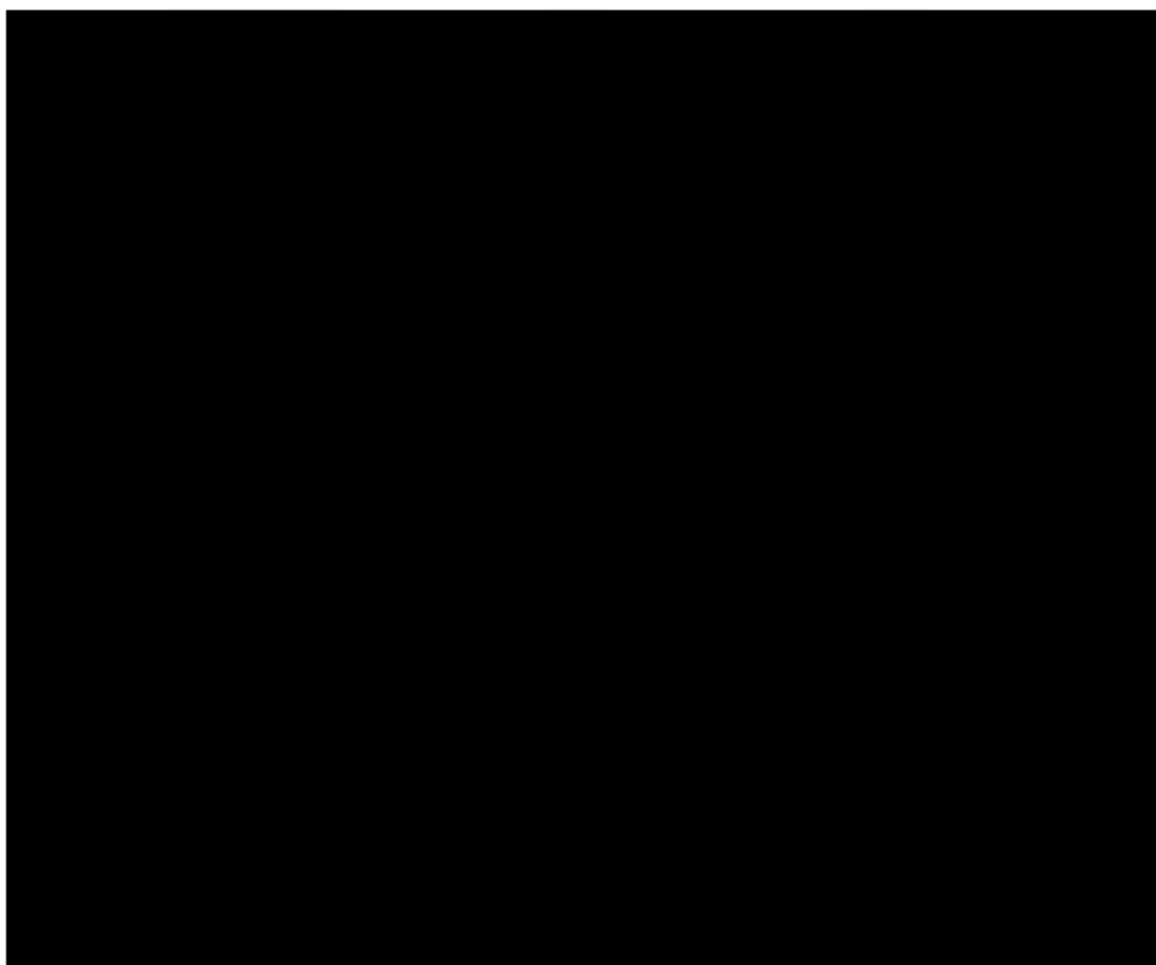


LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1840.

664.



FITZ-WIGGINS.

CHAPTER I.

I WAS the youngest of five children—three sons and two daughters. My father rented a farm in Dorsetshire; and, though he could neither read nor write, yet he managed to pay his rent and rule his family, and was reputed to be well to do in the world.

My eldest brother, George, was brought up at the plough-tail, as his forefathers for many generations had been before him. William, the second son, a sharp lad, who early evinced an aptitude for practices more ingenious than moral, was destined, by the paternal forecast,

for a horse-dealer; probably because it was a profession in which Mr. Bill's peculiar character could find the safest, if not the most profitable vent; and, for myself, as I manifested a decided distaste for all professions, trades, and occupations whatsoever, I was set down by my father for a good-for-nothing fellow, and by my mother and sisters for a genius.

With this reputation, I lounged through the first twelve years of my life, when my father, determined no longer to support me in laziness,

the business by the death of his father, my maternal uncle. He was my senior by some years, and knew the world, having travelled (for a mercantile house), and lived a good deal at the polite city of Bladud. My mother and sisters regarded him as the very glass of fashion, and eagerly swallowed the ideas of life which he, with an easy superior air, vouchsafed to communicate to them. My fine cousin especially honoured me with his notice, and pronounced me to be endowed with natural capacity greatly above my brethren. The latter, indeed, he could hardly condescend to associate with; the one being a mere clod, and the other a vulgar sharper. But in me, untutored as I was, he detected traits of spirit and intelligence, and did not hesitate to declare his opinion, that I should well repay the pains and expense of education.

Such was my mother's sense of her nephew's judgment, that she was for acting upon his advice without further question, but doubted whether the farmer could be persuaded to embark in the speculation. My cousin, con-

fidest in his own address, undertook to bring the old gentleman round, and to our admiration he succeeded. My father consented that, as I was good for nothing better, I should be put to learn the rudiments of reading and writing; and, at the instance of my cousin, promised, moreover, that, in the event of my taking kindly to my book, he would see about my further schooling. In pursuance of this arrangement, I became the pupil of the clerk of the parish; and, whether it was that the dread of stitching or the love of learning pre-

ascertain what the charges would amount to, and how the important affair was to be conducted. The answer speedily arrived, accompanied by the prospectus of an academy, where young gentlemen were boarded and instructed in the Greek and Latin tongues, geography and the use of the globes, elocution, and the belles lettres (washing included), for the consideration of fifteen pounds per annum. This being about one-fourth less than the yearly amount of wages received by one of his carters, appeared to my prudent parent to be not so much out of the way; but being too experienced a dealer at once to give the first price demanded, he ordered my mother to write to the schoolmaster, and offer him twelve pounds per annum for my board and instruction, as above specified.

To this proposal the pedagogue replied with some dignity, that the terms of his establishment admitted of no abatement, as it was conducted on the most liberal scale. He added, that if Mr. Wiggins should think proper to entrust master Simon to his care, he

might rest assured that the young gentleman's health and morals, as well as his mental improvement, should be strictly attended to. He added, that the former, together with the linen department, were under the personal superintendence of Mrs. Sampler.

This epistle gave satisfaction to all parties. My mother and sisters were charmed, and the governor himself magnanimously avowed, that though it was a good deal to pay for mere book learning, yet he would not stand out for a few pounds when the welfare of his child

covering that I had fared better in my father's house than I was likely to do in my new situation. In the first place, I had the misfortune to possess a very importunate stomach, the demands of which had hitherto been amply and substantially gratified. I soon found that this organ, although not particularized in Mr. Sampler's scheme of instruction, was to be a principal subject of discipline. Instead of the plentiful supplies of bread, meat, and beer which it was wont to discuss, my noble digestion was, perforce, to learn how to employ itself on doughy pudding, pot-wash (called soup), skimmed milk, vegetables, and fair water. This sudden change of diet sadly discomposed my interior, insomuch that at the end of a week I was obliged to take to my bed. While my master's wife offered me medicine, instinct, or the powerful monitor within, prompted me to suggest a plate of beef and a horn of ale as a more efficacious remedy.

But this modest request provoked the wrath of my *gouvernante*, who called me a little hog, and protested that I should never be able to

learn if I were fed so grossly. This was confirmed by my master, who gravely assured me that a light stomach and a full mind were alone compatible with each other. But notwithstanding the abstemious system, I made small progress in my learning; on the contrary, the yearning of my bowels after the fleshpot distracted my mind from syntax and prosody, to which nothing but the dread of flagellation could induce me to apply. Yet a superficial observer might have judged from my meagre figure and pallid face that I was a devoted

none partook so sparingly as he did of the frugal fare which graced our board. The freshness of his colour might be accounted for by the circumstance of his being but rarely confined to the unwholesome atmosphere of the school-room, the business of which chiefly devolved upon the spectral assistant. It was whispered indeed—for scandal will spring up even in the tender minds of youth—that our respected head was wont to indulge in private refectations of a substantial and savoury character; and certainly I myself have sometimes fancied that relishing odours from the culinary regions have ascended to my nostrils; but I would rather believe that these were hallucinations of my brain, vividly wrought upon by dwelling on the recollections of my paternal kitchen, than countenance ill-natured gossip.

When I returned home for the holidays, full of blissful anticipations of good cheer, my mother, startled at my altered appearance, hastily inquired whether I had been allowed plenty of good victuals. Thus questioned, I told the truth, while my tender-hearted parent

and sisters listened to the pathetic recital of my privations with alternate pity and indignation.

After loading Mr. Sampler with a great deal of abuse, it was decided that I should no longer pursue my studies on the Pythagorean system. My father, however, did not evince much sympathy with my sufferings, at the detail of which he only remarked that he would warrant "I was more for my belly than my book." Nor did he credit my statement, until the arrival of Mr. Sampler's half-yearly account, swelled to more

a scanty one, was heaped upon the unfortunate pedagogue, whom he swore he would not pay one shilling beyond the stipulated sum, unless compelled thereto by the law.

The consequence was, that the schoolmaster brought his action, and recovered, which wrought upon my father to such a degree, that he conceived a hatred for me, and invoked imprecations on his head if ever he spent another shilling upon my account. Finding that he was determined to keep his vow, my mother wrote to her nephew for his advice and assistance as to the disposal of me. Whereupon my cousin, being at that time in want of an additional hand, offered to take me into his establishment. This proposal was eagerly caught at by my mother, who thought that, next to making her darling a gentleman, he could not be put into a genteeler line than that of which my cousin was such a distinguished ornament.

As my father professed not to care what became of my unlucky self, so that he was rid of me, there remained no obstacle to the plan.

I was therefore consigned, forthwith, to the charge of my elegant cousin, with a letter from my mother, containing an inventory of my effects, and emphatic injunctions to look after my health, religion, and morals.

CHAPTER II.

HOPE is not easily daunted in the breast of youth, therefore I betook myself to my new destination with still more lively anticipations than had accompanied me to Mr. Sampler's academy. I amused myself with the idea of spending life in the service of the fair, behind the counter of a haberdasher's shop at Bath; an elegant lounging occupation, which seemed to be exactly adapted to my taste and talent. I arrived at my cousin's house in Milsom-street, just after the business of the day had concluded. My kinsman received me very kindly; but at the same time with a patronizing air, which seemed intended to repudiate the familiarity which he had tolerated, when he was a visiter at my father's house. He led me into the shop, where I found some half dozen young men and as many ladies, actively employed in gathering

and making up the goods and parcels, which had been exposed or sold during the day. Here he marked with a complacent countenance the admiration with which I viewed the spacious and splendid shop, strewn with a prodigious variety of wares, which appeared to my unsophisticated eye sufficient to satiate the utmost fastidiousness of luxury. But when my cousin informed me, that what I saw comprised only a small part of his stock, my wonder was proportionably augmented, and I looked up to him with that degree of respect almost

aggregate of the day's receipts, which in my opinion amounted to a great sum, we passed from thence into the parlour, where Mr. Smallcombe proposed to explain to me the duties of my new situation. He glanced slightly over my mother's letter, which I delivered to him; and having put it by without remark, commenced the conversation by expressing his regret that my parents had removed me from Mr. Sampler's academy for such a trifling cause. I humbly suggested a doubt whether semi-starvation was not a consideration of some little importance; but my kinsman cut me short, and warned me, that I should never make any figure in life, if I was not prepared to rough it a little at starting.

I heard him submissively; not, however, without some emotion of chagrin; for it struck me that this hint was meant to prepare me for a less easy and agreeable berth than I had taught myself to expect in my cousin's service. He then went on, at some length, to demonstrate my utter helplessness, for the purpose, as it would seem, of impressing me with a sense of

his beneficence in undertaking to provide for me. This I acknowledged with many thanks, and professed my anxiety to make myself useful to him in any way. But Mr. Smallcombe treated my capacity of making any return to him in service, for some time to come, as little or nothing. "However," said he, "as I don't like you to suppose that you are altogether eating the bread of idleness and dependence, I'll try and find some employment for you. Let me see—you write a tolerably good hand,

gaged, leaving me to reflect upon what he had said. The fact is, I was in some measure, and not quite agreeably, undeceived. I had fancied, vain youth ! that I was forthwith to commence a brilliant career behind the counter. I had already, in imagination, exhibited silks and satins with that graceful air, and recommended them to my fair customers, with that insinuating tone, which my cousin had described with so much unction, in drawing the picture (intended, as was supposed, for himself) of an accomplished shopman, and which had made such an impression upon my memory that it was still fresh, though two years had elapsed since it had been revealed to me. Now, alas ! instead of realizing these visions immediately, I was to undergo a long probation, performing the duties of a scribe, varied only by those of a porter ! But I suppressed my rising discontent by the recollection of my father's parting words, that "as I had brewed, so I must bake : " in plain language, that I had chosen my lot in life, and must take the chances of it.

CHAPTER III.

THE next day I was allowed to spend in walking about the city, and purchasing some few necessary articles of apparel. My mother had given me five guineas, the savings of her private purse, for the purpose of equipping

provide myself with a few necessaries only, and these not of the first quality.

I perambulated the streets of the beautiful city in which I had become a resident, with a wonder which, though pleasurable, impressed me with a sense of my own extreme insignificance. I soon discovered, likewise, that there were many shops equal to that of my cousin, and some its superior, in display. The gay equipages, filled with lovely ladies, which rolled past, or stopped at these splendid marts, made me feel abashed at my presumption in deeming myself worthy to hold commercial intercourse even, with such divinities. I returned to my master's house much more reconciled to the humble offices assigned me, which seemed to be almost as much as my present capacity entitled or qualified me to fill. I rose the next morning, therefore, with alacrity, and attended at the counting-house, which was situated in a dark nook of the back shop. Mr. Watkins, the cashier, or clerk, a middle-aged man of a very respectable appearance and remarkably placid countenance, immediately set me to work

in copying, it being requisite that I should acquire a business-like style of hand-writing before I could render him any assistance.

After a few days' practice, I succeeded in mastering the clear running-hand of my model; and having been complimented for my diligence and proficiency therein, both by my master and Mr. Watkins, was put by the latter to regular task-work. My business was to make out bills from the ledger, and write dunning letters. These last were for the most part mere waste of time and stationary since

culated that their assets would be barely sufficient to defray the expense of recovering the debt at law. I know not whether our worst customers were not those who punctually answered our applications with emphatic promises of payment, which entailed upon us a present outlay of capital in the shape of postage, with a very remote and uncertain prospect of any return whatsoever.

As these bad debts, together with many which might be called hopeless, the parties having been several years in gaol, or taken "the benefit of the act," amounted to a large figure in the books, it appeared to me that the losses which my master must sustain were tremendous; and I could not help expressing to Mr. Watkins my surprise that a tradesman should be so complaisant as to allow himself to be plundered thus easily.

The experienced clerk smiled at this ebullition of unsophisticated youth, and observed, in reply, that if there were many names on the books against which the word "doubtful" might be written, there were a few that might

be termed sure pay, and that of course the tradesman took care to insure himself against the hazards of the credit system,—in fact, that those who could and would were made to pay both for themselves and for those who either would not or could not; which," added my instructor, "was only fair and equitable."

This illustration of "fairness and equity" did not quite square with the simple notions that I had learned of right and wrong; but I said nothing, being unwilling to show my ignorance and country breeding. I ventured

closed, and stuck over with auction bills, headed, ' Sale of Bankrupt's Stock.'

" There, Simon, my lad," said he, " is a practical reply to your inquiry. The man who quitted that house last week, for lodgings in the King's Bench, opened it twelve months ago with a good capital on the ready money plan, and sold at a considerable discount. He would make no exception in favour of any person, however substantial or well known, but strictly adhered to his rule of never allowing goods to be delivered without the money. The consequence was, that my ready money gentleman very soon figures in the Gazette. However, they say he'll pay twenty shillings in the pound."

Still I did not quite understand how my master could suffer a deficit of nearly two-fifths in value of his book debts at the end of the year, and yet reap a sufficient return from his capital ; for I could not perceive that he practised any direct dishonesty in charging different prices to different creditors, according to the means which each was supposed to possess.

"No," said Watkins; "that would be a highly disreputable and dangerous plan for any tradesman to go upon, — though I believe I could name more than one house in this very city where it is systematically acted upon; but we do business in a more regular and respectable way. In the first place, you must know, we are obliged to settle with the wholesale house, either in cash or by short bills. Well, what with goods hanging upon hand, or customers not being regular in their payments, we calcu-

property so easily to persons of dubious integrity or resources.

“It seems to me,” said I, “that if you reduced your prices, and were more circumspect in giving credit, that your profits must be proportionably increased.”

“Bless my heart !” exclaimed my instructor, “how slow you are, Simon ! It’s by the bad debts that tradesmen ride in their coaches. If it wasn’t for them, we should soon shut up shop. Talk of ready money, indeed ! Why, man, it would be the ruin of us. During the time I’ve belonged to the house, I could count up, I suppose, no less than fifty or sixty people, who, on first starting, wanted the bill and receipt to be sent home with the order ; but no : our object was to get them into the books, so we sent home the goods, but forgot the bill ; and if our customer repeated his wish to settle his small account, we affected to be shocked, begged he would not mention it, and assured him, that it was not of the slightest consequence. Whenever we succeeded in evading the first two or three demands for the bill,

we felt quite satisfied that such ill-timed curiosity would very soon diminish, and ultimately die away altogether. Thus we accomplished our object of converting little, paltry, ready money dealings into bad debts of considerable magnitude. It is true, that a few of these customers were never heard of after a year or two, and two or three are quite gone to pot. But these were no more than the fair proportion of losses. In the whole of the transactions to

CHAPTER IV.

For the space of twenty-four hours after the conversation detailed in the preceding chapter, my conscience was perplexed with sundry doubts, whether the aiding and abetting, even in my subordinate capacity, a system so inconsistent with the lessons of religion and morality which I had learned, as that described by Mr. Watkins, could be conducive either to my temporal or eternal welfare. My father, though he would drive a hard bargain, buying at the lowest and selling at the highest, yet always scrupulously kept on the hither side of the boundary which separates fair dealing from chicane. He vaunted himself on "never having wronged anybody of the tithe of a pin." The irregular propensities of my brother Bill had afforded him great concern. Why? Because

character was as good as capital; and though he had known cheating prosper for a while, yet he had always found honesty to be the best policy in the long run, and that was what a man ought to look to; besides, it was wicked to cheat.

These results of practical experience, sanctioned as they were by religious and moral precept, though they had failed to make an impression on my graceless brother, had sunk into my mind; and, on this occasion, the first that had happened to call them forth rose up

some sordid trade, in which I should have plenty of work and no play—a situation most abhorrent to my nature. My principles, therefore, were of a growth too feeble to resist the influence of circumstances and convenience. I argued with myself, that my secession could not operate as the slightest discouragement to the practice of which I disapproved, whereas it would be attended with present personal inexpedience. I contented myself with a mental resolution, that, in the event of my ever arriving at the power and dignity of a master tradesman, I would make amends for my present delinquency by discountenancing, to the utmost of my ability, the ruinous and reprobate system upon which my brethren acted.

Thus did I, for the first time, prove the virtue of sophistry, in plastering the wounds of a tender conscience. Let it not be supposed, however, that the situation for which I made this sacrifice was one of a very enviable character. I was confined pretty regularly to the counting-house during the daytime; and, after business hours, my relaxation was to perambu-

late the streets, laden with parcels for delivery at different quarters of the city—a combination of services which my master could have imposed on a poor relation only. Nevertheless, I could have borne my lot, I think, contentedly, had I been recompensed by those creature comforts which, as the reader may have already perceived, I was so well qualified to appreciate. But, alas! in this respect, I fared little better than when I was a pupil of the Pythagorean Mr. Sampler. My cousin's domestic establishment was on the most moderate scale, consist-

ing her master's inevitable ruin, seemed determined that neither the butcher nor baker should have any hand in that catastrophe. The dry crusts which her toothless gums could not masticate, rinds of cheese, rusty bacon, potatoes, skimmed milk, and sour small-beer—these were the dainties upon which I was usually regaled. I made a humble and pathetic appeal to my kinsman for better and more abundant fare, but was abruptly repulsed. He told me that I was a young glutton, and that Dorothy assured him there was no satisfying me, and that I should eat him out of house and home if I were not kept on the muzzle.

I was not surprised at this rebuff, Mr. Smallcombe having treated me with marked harshness since I had turned a resolutely deaf ear to his broad hints, that instead of portering, I should brush his clothes and black his shoes; the boy who had had the charge of these important offices having, like many of his predecessors, lately run away; because, it was supposed, that he had no taste for hard word and plenty of kicks, with scanty meals and no pay. But

besides that I found the air and exercise necessary for my health after the sedentary occupations of the day, my pride revolted from becoming valet to a man who, though he had the advantage of being richer, was my near blood relation, and therefore not a jot better than myself. He was so much incensed at my evident determination not to be his lackey, that I believe he would not have hesitated to turn me out of doors, had he not felt that my services were more than an equivalent for my maintenance—such as it was.

CHAPTER V.

IN this manner a year rolled over ; and if at the end of that time my person was somewhat attenuated, I was sufficiently indemnified by finding my wits sharpened, and my capacity enlarged. About this time the foreman having resigned, with the view of setting up for himself, there was a vacancy in the shop, to which I was promoted, with a salary of ten pounds per annum. This appendage to my preferment I had extorted by a threat of seeking to better myself elsewhere ; a piece of assurance which greatly astonished my master, who upbraided me with my ingratitude, but ended by conceding my demand, rather than submit to the alternative.

My condition was now essentially amended. I had still, it is true, abundance of work ; but

the bustle and gaiety of the shop was an agreeable exchange for the monotonous labours of the desk. I had my evenings to myself, and amused myself sometimes in walking abroad, or, if disposed to partake of the pleasures of society, I could enjoy them, together with a clean pipe and a glass of ale, for the small charge of three pence, at a house much resorted to by the rising generation of shopmen and apprentices. Last, though not least in my estimation, was the improvement in my fire, which I had strictly stipulated for, and

take my share of attendance upon the fair dames and demoiselles who daily thronged our shop. I believe I was foolish enough to entertain an idea that I might perchance steal a heart, while measuring a yard of silk, or showing off a new pattern.

There was a tradition that a young gentleman of the house had, many years ago, carried off a nabob's daughter—a twenty thousand pounder. The conversation of some of my brethren, which pretty plainly insinuated that several young ladies of fortune and fashion sighed for them, likewise contributed to inflame my imagination, until it was deluded to this pitch of impertinence. At length a vacancy, and consequent shifting of places, gave me the wished-for shove; and for the first time, with ingenuous diffidence and trembling hand,—it was not to be expected that I could at once, *per saltum* as it were, attain unto the easy assurance of my practised brethren—I unfolded a piece of lutestring before a beautiful girl, who, in a voice that penetrated to my very soul, had requested to be shown that

article. But my confusion was apparently lost upon the fair cause of it, whose ardent gaze was intently fixed upon the senseless gaudery before her. Having looked at it for some time, she expressed her wish to see others. I flew to obey her, and in a minute returned laden with every article of the kind upon which I could lay my hands, and spread them on the counter.

She tossed them over in succession, then called for patterns of various goods, — all of which I produced with undiminished alacrity.

co-mates; but they laughed at me for a greenhorn, and told me, for my comfort, that I should find this a case of daily occurrence. They explained that it was a favourite amusement of ladies, who had nothing better to do, to rummage over a tradesman's most valuable stock, without any, or at least but a colourable intention of purchasing anything; and this diversion they call *shopping*. Long as I had been in the house, I was ignorant of this practice; for the class of customers with whom I had hitherto been conversant, though I might not always be able to suit them with the article they wanted, yet they evidently invariably came with a *bonâ fide* intention to buy, and were for the most part easily pleased and promptly served. I had indeed often observed at the aristocratic extremity of the shop a vast array of goods upon the counter, but it had never occurred to me to doubt that these were produced for actual sale.

A few such instances as I have described materially abated, I am ashamed to say, my ardour for the service of the sex, and soon

sobered me down into a steady methodical shopman. I acquired, in time, by habit and observation, a tact by which I could discriminate between the ladies who came *shopping*, and those who really meant trade, and became noted for studiously shirking the former ; since, in addition to their being ten times the most troublesome, they were generally the most haughty and distant in their manners.

CHAPTER VI.

NEARLY two years of this life passed away without any incident worth relating, when, coming into the shop one morning at the usual hour, to open it, and prepare for the business of the day, I was stopped by Mr. Watkins, who told me that I might spare myself the trouble, as my master was a bankrupt. The coolness with which he communicated this portentous intelligence, for which I was utterly unprepared, made me stare for a moment, under the impression that it could be only a jest. But the cashier, perceiving my incredulity, assured me that it was a fact, and named the person by whom the docket had been struck. I held up my hands in astonishment at the ingratitude and treachery of mankind; for the creditor mentioned, the head of

a wholesale house in London, was an intimate friend of Mr. Smallcombe's. They drank together, hunted together, and paid frequent visits at each others' houses. I reminded Mr. Watkins of these facts, as circumstantial evidence against the credibility of his news.

The clerk heard me with one of those peculiar smiles, which seemed to imply more than he would allow his lips to utter. He admitted that all this was very true, and repeated that Mr. Hudson had made our master a bankrupt. So saying, and adding that he had a great

was the sole support of invalid parents, and expected to receive his half year's wages in the ensuing week, was overwhelmed with despair. Another, who had for some time past mortified himself in a thread-bare coat, and I believe by still greater privations, to the end that he might scrape together the means of releasing a father whom unforeseen misfortune had consigned to gaol, had now the misery of feeling that his filial piety was in all probability baffled. The hardest case, perhaps, was that of a poor girl, who had been in the shop for several years, and who had left the greater part of her earnings to accumulate at interest in her employer's hands, with the view of realizing a small sum, which might enable her to accomplish the cherished object of her youth, namely, a union with an industrious young man, whom she loved too wisely and too well to marry until the savings of each should enable them to set up in business, and meet the expenses of a family.

I must confess that such aggravated cases as these diverted my mind from the exclusive

contemplation of my own proper share in this wide-spread calamity — I mean the precarious position of my quarter's wages, amounting to two pounds ten shillings, the sense of which had struck so heavily upon my heart, when the sad tidings were first imparted to me by Mr. Watkins. After each had bewailed his own particular mishap, and (except in the instances above specified) insisted upon some peculiar circumstance which entitled him to a greater share of sympathy than his fellows,

ceived by his audience with clamorous intimations of assent. He took upon himself to predict likewise that Mr. Smallcombe would not pay five shillings in the pound, and that before six months were over he would set up again on as great a scale as before, in which prophecy his hearers also acquiesced. For my own part, I could not believe anything so monstrous, yet I heard the same thing insinuated by parties who were not interested.

It would be illiberal to say that the perfect calmness of my kinsman's deportment in these adverse circumstances seemed to countenance such a rumour. I certainly was surprised to find him bear up under his ruin with fortitude, nay, even with cheerfulness. At first, I had not cared to put myself in his way, having had painful experience of his extreme sensibility to the every-day crosses and petty vexations of life. But perhaps his philosophy was developed only by great occasions ; so far from making me the butt of his temper, as he had frequently done, he never addressed me

more graciously than when he gave me my dismissal, with an expression of regret that, the unfortunate derangement of his affairs precluded the possibility of discharging at present the balance of salary that was due to me.

CHAPTER VII.

BEING thus for the first time, and at a moment's warning, thrown upon my own resources, it is not surprising that I should have been exceedingly perplexed how to dispose of myself. Mr. Watkins, to whom it first occurred to me to apply for advice and assistance, was so overwhelmed by business, that he could only tell me the best thing I could do would be to endeavour to get a situation in the town, and, if I did not succeed, to take this consolation, that there were many worse off than myself. With this he dismissed me, somewhat piqued that my merit and misfortune had not animated the bosom of the clerk with a greater degree of interest in my behalf.

Nevertheless, I took his advice, and made many applications for employment: but I

found that the city was overstocked with candidates for such situations ; and instead of bettering myself, as I had proposed to take this opportunity of doing, I could obtain nothing more than an offer so humble, that I declined it with disdain. I believe I might have been hired at one of the " flash " shops, where goods are always selling " considerably below prime cost," or at a " dreadful sacrifice ;" but as these concerns were looked down upon as " low " by the regular trade, I could not bear

humorous vein, suffered the tortures of suppressed laughter, because, as a young man, I was careful to do nothing which was considered *incorrect*. Had I been free to choose a companion out of the number of my comrades, with reference only to his agreeable qualities, I should have selected Tibbetts; but fashion bade me cultivate the acquaintance of Mr. Piminy, one of our gentlemen less remarkable for brilliancy of wit, than for elegance of dress and address. For a boon companion, commend me to Tibbetts; but Piminy was the man one would wish to be seen arm-in-arm with, on a Sunday afternoon, in the Crescent.

It was this lively fellow that I encountered, when my pride was somewhat abated by a small taste of adversity, and the painful sense that neither Mr. Piminy nor any other exquisite would give me the smallest assistance in my present emergency. Tibbetts, though his more than usually seedy appearance bespoke him still out of place, accosted me as cheerily as ever. We made mutual inquiries as to each other's success, and found, as each had antici-

puted, that we had been both equally-unfortunate. He asked me what I proposed to do, and I frankly told him that I was open to any suggestion.

"Come to London, then, with me," said he. "I've got a friend there who'll do my business, and I'll introduce you to him. I dare say he can do something for you as well. But stay, hang it! have you got any swag?" I answered cautiously, that I was very differently off in that respect, lest this question

the treble that which he exhibited. At this information his countenance brightened again.

"Tut," cried he, "we shall be able to travel like lords. I had made up my mind to walk it, but now we can go comfortably outside the heavy night coach. Well, that's settled."

It would have been ungracious to demur to this arrangement, because Mr. Tibbetts so coolly assumed to benefit by my property, when he had offered his services to me in London. Nay, I thought it worth while to advance a small matter on the speculation of his being useful to me, secretly resolved, however, that this pecuniary partnership should cease as soon as we arrived at the great city. We proceeded forthwith to the booking-office, secured our places for the same evening; and, having appointed to meet at the coach, returned to discharge our respective lodgings, and pack up our traps.

Punctually at the time specified, I and a large square deal box, containing all my movables, were at the office. Presently afterwards my friend made his appearance, with a very

small bundle under his arm; which, in answer to my inquiry, he told me comprised all his baggage, and consisted of a clean shirt and hose, a comb, a brush, and a razor.

If I was surprised at the diminutiveness of his kit, much more did he marvel at the magnitude of mine. After cracking some jokes upon it, not much to my liking, he made free to ask what might be the nature of the property it contained? I enumerated, in a tone of gravity meant to repress unseasonable plea-

which, together with some other things, my mother had strained a point to procure by way of fitting me out for genteel life.

Neither did I omit to make honourable mention of a handsome suit of clothes, that had not been on my back six times. I boasted likewise of some literary treasures, such as "The whole Duty of Man," an odd volume of "Thomas à Kempis," six volumes of "Sir Charles Grandison," "The Eton Grammar," "Cocker's Arithmetic," "The Delphin Virgil," "The Fatal Oath; or, the Sorrows of Seraphina," in five volumes, together with two novels of high life, in sheets, of which a friend of mine, a cheesemonger, knowing me to be of a reading turn, had made me a present.

When I had finished my catalogue, Tibbetts burst out into one of those horse-laughs which used so fearfully to shatter the nerves of poor Mr. Piminy,—a piece of rudeness and vulgarity which disgusted me so much, that I was half disposed to cut all further connection with him: I doubted whether an introduction by so impolite a person might not rather retard than

advance my prospects in life ; but the recollection of the moneys which I had invested in the speculation opportunely occurred to determine me to follow it out. I turned, therefore, with a glance of silent disdain from my companion ; and, having calmly given my instructions to the guard respecting the safe storage of my box, took my seat on the coach with a dignified air. I was followed by Tibbatts, who, seeing that I was offended, and being, to give him his due, a perfectly good-natured fellow, expressed his sorrow for having annoyed

But even these miserable circumstances could not quell the lively imagination of my friend. Without any additional covering, the only difference being that the shabby and skimpy brown surtout, his ordinary wear, was buttoned close to his body, instead of hanging loosely from his shoulders, as from a clothes-horse, he was an apt illustration of the old ditty, the burthen of which imports that poverty and cheerfulness, when associated together, will make their way in the world. Although his features were pinched up and empurpled by the cold, he must needs amuse himself "by taking rises" (as he termed his fun) out of two staid elderly men, who occupied the seats opposite to us.

These individuals, one of whom we afterwards learned was a minister of the Baptist persuasion, going to London to attend a sectarian meeting, were as unpromising subjects for wit as could well have been met withal. No part of them but their noses and eyes was visible, so heedful had they been to defend themselves against the weather; and for the

first half hour neither of them had opened his lips, not caring, perhaps, to admit the cold air. By that time my companion, finding that I was not disposed to keep up the ball of conversation, turned his attention to our fellow-travellers opposite.

He began by making a few general remarks, of which the persons to whom they were addressed took no further notice than by a nod or stare. He then commenced a series of impertinent questions, to which he could only meet

affetation of great penitence and humility. Nevertheless, he continued to pester them, until their native dulness proved too mighty for his wit, and they began to slumber. Tibbetts himself was then content to enjoy a little repose; but about the middle of the night, when the coach stopped to change horses, and just as I was, for the first time, sinking into a gentle doze, my troublesome neighbour nudged me, and whispered in my ear that he was going to sell the preacher a bargain. I perishingly answered that I cared nothing about it, and begged that he would, at all events, let me rest in peace.

Before I could re-settle myself to sleep, Tibbetts had shaken the Baptist out of his, who, starting and opening his drowsy eyes on the glare of a street-lamp, was greeted by the voice of his tormentor, pretending that he wanted to tell him a capital story, while he had it in his mind. This was beyond human endurance, and the enraged dissenter, forgetting his clerical character, cursed him for a meddling impertinent rascal, reviled him as a

member of the swell mob, and told him that his fate would be the gallows in this world, and hell fire in the next.

This denunciation produced a burst of laughter in the unhappy subject of it, wherefore the reverend gentleman was so exasperated, that his tongue in vain essayed at first to articulate, but clenching his fist, and setting his teeth, he swore, as soon as he regained his utterance, that he would knock Tibbetts off the coach, if he attempted to molest him any farther; a menace which coming as it did from a man

not help commenting upon his frothy appearance, which I thought argued characteristic sloth and nastiness, inasmuch as it admitted of so easy and obvious a remedy. But this was rather too much for my friend's good nature to endure. He answered tartly, that if I did not like his appearance, I might lump it; that he, who was ten years my senior, and knew the world, was not to be taught by a chit like me; and that he thought himself perfectly competent to manage his own carcass. He would wear a beard as long as Abraham's if he liked it, and

about to traverse the streets of London, and to present ourselves at a great man's house. Without saying another word, my friend vanished; and, in an incredibly short space of time, considering his acknowledged want of practice in the toilet, returned with an exterior much improved, or at least no longer unsightly.

Having discussed a hearty breakfast, to which my friend (very unnecessarily) exhorted me, by the consideration that we should pay no more on that account, we set out in search of our expected patron. As we went, my ally explained to me who this person was, and the nature of his claims upon him. It seemed that the individual in question had been the intimate friend of Tibbetts's father, who had done him some good turns, by means of which he had got on in life, and was now no less than butler, or house-steward, to a great lord. Mr. Robinson had frequently acknowledged his obligations to old Tibbetts during his lifetime; and, when he died, had desired the sons to command him, if he could be in any way serviceable to them. "But," said Tibbetts, "my brother was then

apprenticed, and I had a very good place, and wanted for nothing. So that, you see, as I haven't drawn upon his gratitude for anything yet, I have a right to expect that he will now do the handsome thing, both by me and my friend. I think our prospects are pretty fairish, eh?"

I could not but acknowledge that they were, and secretly felicitated myself on my good fortune, in having fallen in with a man who was willing to use such interest as he possessed in my behalf. As we trudged along, we debated

My heart beat with throbs of ambition at hearing that such a brilliant destiny might possibly be mine. I poured forth a profusion of thanks. "Pooh!" cried my generous friend, "damn all that. I'm fit for one thing, and you for t'other—that 's all. What 's the odds, so long as you 're happy? But I say, Simon, you wont cut us, if I shouldn't happen to be in such swell society as you, will ye?"

I repelled such a supposition with warmth, and magnanimously declared that I would own my friend, though I was in a party of my gayest acquaintance, and he was in a threadbare coat. This conversation, however interesting, did not bring us, either figuratively or literally, an inch nearer our destination. We had perambulated various streets, and had had our tempers a good deal tried to no purpose. For my own part, I was surprised to find such disobliging insolent manners in the inhabitants of a city which I had taught myself to suppose was the focus of civilization. I had requested of several persons, with a gravity and emphasis suited to the dignity of the theme, to direct

me in the way to the residence of the Earl of Appleshaw. In answer to this civil inquiry, one had given a complicated direction, with the obvious intention of misleading us; another gave us an answer which was not only wholly irrelevant, but extremely insulting. A third passed on without taking the least notice of my question.

My companion's applications did not meet with much better success. Some,—and these perhaps showed the coolest assurance,—pretended that they did not know where the Earl

blackguards in London who desired no better fun than misleading unsophisticated strangers. He informed us that we were some distance from the Earl of Appleshaw's house, we being in Piccadilly and his lordship residing in Soho Square. He gave us the number, and a particular description of the mansion, that we might be sure not to mistake it. He showed us the way also very clearly.

We both thanked him very sincerely, and set forth, not a little pleased that our vexations were at length terminated; for we both agreed that it was easy to see with half an eye that the young man who had shown so much sympathy with our distress, and taken so much pains to set us right, was a real gentleman. But, alas! how fallacious are outward appearances! this individual, though his cloth was of the first quality,—though he wore a fancy waistcoat of an expensive pattern, together with a massive gold chain—in a word, though his dress and appearance seemed to us to bespeak the first style of fashion,—was nothing better than a bite.

When we arrived at the house, which we immediately recognized by the description, though it had not the imposing exterior which we had expected to find in the residence of a great nobleman, we knocked modestly at the door, which was opened by a grave, elderly man, of whom we inquired whether we could speak with Mr. Robinson. The domestic answered that he did not know any gentleman of that name; whereupon we asked whether that was not the house of the Earl of Appleshaw. At this query the fellow stared angrily.

see ye thus shamelessly, and I may say boastfully, exposing your wicked habits in the broad face of day. Have ye not heard what has been denounced against those who stand on the steps of the wanton's house? O fie! And you, (turning particularly to me,) "poor, unhappy, abandoned boy! who ought to be learning lessons of morality, instead of practising deeds of sin, what shall I say to you? I am overpowered at such precocious depravity."

Here he paused, and I, who had actually taken his utterly unintelligible and most impertinent harangue for a new specimen of that town wit with which I had been already so much harassed, now lost all patience, and burst forth with a volley of every abusive epithet that I could command. Thus assailed, the dark stranger shook his head, sighed, and gave me up for lost; a sentence which enraged me to that degree, that I believe I should have offered him personal violence, had not Tibbetts restrained me, while the Impertinent himself, finding that he had carried the joke far enough, walked on.

: By this time a small mob had been attracted by the commotion; and, to escape from their jeers and jokes, we took shelter in a neighbouring shop. In answer to our inquiry, who lived at the house to which we had been directed? — the shopman informed us that the house we pointed out was one of ill character; and whoever sent us thither in search of a nobleman, must have egregiously imposed upon our innocence, as no persons of quality lived in that quarter of the town.

The scene which had been passed at

embarrassments, to proceed to his lordship's house in a hackney coach. We gladly took the hint, the consequence of which was that in less than half an hour we were safely and veritably deposited at the door of the Earl's residence.

CHAPTER IX.

HAVING dismissed our equipage, we approached with bashful steps, the stately threshold of the peer, and our application for admittance was answered as soon as the porter

shook me by the hand very graciously when I was presented to him. He did not confine his civilities to empty professions; for when these were dispensed, he insisted on our taking some refreshment, and ordered a natty footboy, who attended his bell, to bring in a tray.

While the luncheon was preparing, Mr. Steward, whose manners were remarkably polished, expressed his hope that he was indebted for the pleasure of seeing the son of his "excellent friend" to some good situation which the former had obtained in London. Tibbetts availed himself of this favourable opening to disclose the object of his visit. Mr. Robinson listened, with the same urbane smile and measured inclination of the head, to the statement which Tibbetts delivered of his own views and those of his friend (myself to wit). When he had finished his communication, Mr. Robinson replied that he should feel great pleasure in promoting his and my wishes, but candidly owned that he had some doubt whether he could be of immediate use to us in the line which we had chalked out.

"I could name," he said, "several young men of my acquaintance, very well educated young men, and of very genteel connections, who would gladly take a subordinate situation in a second or third rate city establishment. But the times are so bad, and trade is so languishing, that the shopkeepers have been obliged to discharge half their young men. It's no use having shopmen, you know, Mr. a—I—beg—your—pardon—when there are no customers—ha! ha! ha! Pray give me leave; will you take some pleasant sir, or some

certainly not sacrificed to the Graces. He made me blush by his vulgar remarks and wonderments about "the set out," the fine quality and cleanliness of the napkin which was spread upon the tray, the silver forks, with which, as he must needs gratuitously inform us, he then ate for the first time. Notwithstanding my winks, and kicks on his shins, he would persist in dipping his knife in the salt-cellar, and conveying the food to his mouth with the same implement. The booby also refused Mr. Robinson's challenge to drink wine, because, forsooth, he preferred "a pull" at the Barclay and Perkins XXX. I could not help contemplating this unmannerly conduct with a feeling of pity, as the reflection occurred to me that it must be an insuperable bar to his prospects in life.

A long fast, and the vexations which we had encountered in the streets, together with some small degree of anxiety about the result of our application to Mr. Robinson, had hitherto repressed his facetiousness, but now, alas! it broke loose again. To my horror, he

commenced a burlesque history of the day's adventures, which I would have given a guinea to keep secret, as they were not calculated to enhance Mr. Robinson's sense of our knowledge of the world.

Luckily our host did not seem to take; he smiled, certainly, but evidently because he was too courteous to look grave at a man's jokes. I concealed my annoyance, and affected likewise to smile away the *mauvaise plaisance* of my companion, and took the first opportunity of diverting the conversation into a

which certainly was at that time of more
interest to both of us. Our powerful
friend did not fail to renew his professions of
willingness to serve us, coupled, however, with
a recapitulation of the many formidable ob-
stacles to the success of his exertions in our
behalf. Still he assured us that no exertions
should be wanting on his part to forward our
cause. And, rising as he spoke, apologized
for being obliged to wish us good day, his
hour of business having arrived. He shook
each of us very cordially by the hand, and said
he should be delighted to see us at any time
when we might like to drop in, very hand-
sly bowed us out of the apartment, and in
a peremptory tone ordered his boy to show us
out at the hall door.

CHAPTER X.

IF our reception by Mr. Robinson had not surpassed our most sanguine expectations in its cordiality and promise, we could not agree that we were disappointed therewith. As to my friend, he was one of those light-hearted

such a vulgarian to any situation which would entitle him to mix in good society.

Whether Mr. Robinson meant to use his interest in my behalf, I could not safely conjecture; but I inclined to hope so, notwithstanding the difficulties which he had started, as the meaning of these might possibly have been to enhance the favour. I did not, of course, communicate my views, to their full extent, to poor Tibbetts, being unwilling seriously to damp his hopes, or hurt his feelings. I threw out a delicate hint, however, that he would do well to turn his thoughts towards earning a livelihood in some menial capacity, which I thought it probable Mr. Robinson would procure for him.

I was glad to find that he took my suggestion in good part, and professed that it was a matter of indifference to him what situation in life he filled, so as it would enable him to keep body and soul together, and have an occasional frolic. I was pleased to find the poor fellow in a frame of mind so suitable to his condition and prospects; for I could not but entertain

a sort of regard for him, despite his low-lived manners and conversation.

But while I was speculating on the future, the immediate means of subsistence were wanting. My stock was now reduced to a few shillings, and these I must share with my companion; so that two or three days, at the utmost, would bring us to destitution. With the view of stimulating him to exertion, I imparted this doleful fact, and its necessary consequence, to Tibbetts, who, far from feeling alarmed at such intelligence, congratulated me and him.

Having been somewhat awakened to the ways of the town by our first day's experience, we met with no adventure worthy of record, save that a handsome silk handkerchief, (my only one, by the way,) which I wore half hanging out of my coat pocket, after the fashion of Mr. Piminy, was abstracted therefrom by one of the unprincipled persons who infest the streets of the metropolis. When I discovered my loss, I was strongly disposed to go before a police magistrate, and request the assistance of a Bow-street officer; but was deterred by the information that the expense of such a proceeding would far exceed the value of the article stolen.

To these holidays succeeded that dreaded morn which was to usher in a dinnerless day. We then held a consultation, as to what was to be done; but though our wits were sharpened by necessity, our united ingenuity failed for a long time to hit upon any device to procure us a present meal. At length we agreed, that our best chance would be to drop a call upon Mr. Robinson. We sallied forth, therefore, timing

our visit so as to catch him when he should be at leisure ; and we proposed, not only to satisfy our hunger, but likewise to come to an understanding with the major-domo respecting his wish or ability to serve us.

When we arrived at the Earl's hospitable mansion, a grateful steam of savoury viands ascending from the kitchen area saluted our nostrils. Our natural appetites, rendered more eager for fruition by this incitement, we hastily made the signal for admission, and cursed

room, I asked him if he recollected us, to which he immediately answered, in a significant tone, "Perfectly." And finding that we stood irresolute, he requested us to retire, as my lord was coming down stairs to go to his carriage, which was in waiting.

With slow and reluctant steps we then turned away; and scarcely had we quitted the door, when my rage at this disappointment burst out against Tibbetts, to whose blackguard appearance I attributed it that we had been denied admittance to Mr. Robinson's party. Tibbetts was for bursting out into an invective against the insolence of the footman, but I warmly vindicated him, and declared, that he was perfectly right not to admit such a dirty, ill-dressed fellow to disgrace his superior's company.

Tibbetts cast a half rueful, half comical glance at his apparel, which incensed me beyond measure. I abused him, I believe, in very gross terms, and reproached him with the money which I had advanced on his account. This allusion alone seemed to touch him nearly;

all my other reviling he had borne with good humour—at least with patience; but when I told him that he had quartered himself upon me, and cheated me of money under false pretences, he started, and muttering that “he could not stand that,” abruptly turned away, and, striking down a narrow street, was out of sight in a few minutes. My first reflection was one of remorse, for having suffered my petulance to carry me so far. I had no reason to doubt Tibbetts’ goodness of heart and honesty of intentions, whatever his faults might be. I re-

CHAPTER XI.

I REMAINED at home the rest of the day, in expectation of my chum; but he did not appear, and his absence, combined with the emptiness of my stomach, and the desolateness of my prospects, made me very melancholy, which being perceived by my landlady, a respectable widow woman, who kept a small huckster's shop, she kindly inquired if anything ailed me? At first I evaded her inquisitiveness; but being pressed, I opened my heart to the good woman, and told her, not only that I had had a dispute with my friend, who I feared had been hurried into some rash act by my ill usage, but likewise that, in consequence of my being disappointed in the hope of obtaining a situation immediately, through the interest of a friend, I was reduced to penury: in fact, that I had

not the means of paying my lodging, nor, of course, of purchasing another meal, unless I pawned my clothes, which I should be driven to do the next day, unless some turn of fortune should take place. The good woman was manifestly affected at this pitiful story. She dared to say, indeed, that poor Tibbetts had either cut his throat or thrown himself into the Thames; but, at the same time, bade me hope for the best. Meanwhile she insisted that I should take a dish of tea with her and a friend; she was sure I would pay her when I got a

feelings, I made a hearty meal of tea and buttered toast. I stayed at home all next day, and evening closed, yet no Tibbetts appeared. But, at a very late hour, as I sat very despondingly in my chamber, studying whether any, or what means could be employed to obtain tidings of my friend, I recognized, to my great delight, his step upon the stair. I rushed out to meet him, but started back when my eyes fell upon him, so metamorphosed had he become. I no longer saw the shabby brown coat, the shirt inclining to the like sombre hue, and the half-washed features of my friend ; but, in place of these, I beheld his person arrayed in the gay livery of the Earl of Appleshaw ; his linen was fresh from the laundry, and his face had evidently been in closer intimacy with soap and water than I had known it for some time ; his locks also had undergone the discipline, not only of the scissors, but of the curling-irons and the powder-puff ! He laughed at my obvious amazement, and advanced to me with the affectation of a footman's jaunty air. Recovering myself before I made any inquiry

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respecting the history of his transformation, I apologized, in few but strong words, for my conduct on the preceding day.

Tibbette was instantly satisfied, and assured me that all was forgotten, and even claimed a share of the blame to himself. He said that my *upsetting* had done him a great benefit, for it was the cause of his now being well provided for. It appeared that when he left me, stung by my reproaches, he had determined not to return to me until he had made himself independent of my further assistance. Under

that it will about repay you what you 've laid out on my account."

So saying, he tendered me the glittering coin, which, on account of the unfriendly allusions I had so recently made to this subject, I hesitated to take ; but as Tibbetts was resolute, I suffered him to force the vile dross, the proverbial mischief-maker between friends, into my waistcoat pocket. After this little struggle between refinement of feeling on the one side, and straightforward honesty on the other, Tibbetts proceeded to expatiate on what he was content to term his good fortune.

" To give him his due," said he, " Robinson has done the handsome thing by me at last. He clearly proved to me that he did not want an additional hand ; and that if he did, he could have the pick of a hundred better qualified than myself : therefore, you see, it was out of pure good nature he took me into my lord's service. As I have nominally nothing to do, all the odd jobs fall to my share, such as carrying coals, drawing water, assisting to clean knives, black shoes, &c. Besides, I find that

I shall have to rise an hour earlier than the other men servants, to brush the liveries, of which there are six suits in daily wear. I am expected to be clean and liveried at six o'clock, to help the footmen to lay the cloth, under the superintendence of the under-butler, who does my awkwardness every minute, and calls this teaching me my business, for which, I assure you, he thinks I ought to be very much obliged to him; so that among them I think they will take care that I shall not eat the bread of idleness. The only drawback to my

with work, and requires to be valeted. Now as I unfortunately stand only five feet nine in my shoes, and have no particular beauty to boast of, I can never hope, as my taller fellow-servants assure me, to rise beyond a single-handed place in some half-and-half sort of family. But never mind; as I said before, what 's the odds so long as you 're 'appy."

I congratulated my friend on his having secured an immunity from present starvation; and with respect to his future prospects, I gave him that common-place consolation which alone I could conscientiously afford. It was plain that the good-natured fellow was no longer in a condition to offer me a helping hand; indeed I felt that it would be derogatory to accept the recommendation of a footman.

While I was thus musing upon my own fate, Tibbetts, who seemed to guess the subject of my thoughts, at once brought the subject on the tapis with an abrupt exclamation of, " Hang it ! Simon, if I was you I 'd sink false pride, and look out for a service."

I smiled, and might have replied in a parody of the Macedonian's famous answer, "So would I, if I were Tibbets," but repressed the repartee, from a reluctance to hurt the good creature's feelings by the suggestion of an odious comparison. Nay, I thanked him for his advice, and said I would consider of it. He urged me with much emphasis to do so, and flattered me with the assurance that a genteel fellow like me could not fail to get on in service; for though my slight stature disqualified me for the first rank of footmen, yet

restness, and promising to call the following evening, if he could get leave of absence, he was obliged to hurry away, the hour which he had been permitted to spend abroad having almost expired.

CHAPTER XII.

AFTER he was gone, I began seriously to debate in my own mind whether I should lose caste by passing from the service of the public behind a counter, to the post of a nobleman's valet. As I desired Tibbets's hint, that it was

fashionable register-office, to which I was guided by advertisement.

After waiting in an outer room for nearly two hours, among a crowd of candidates for servitude, my turn for admission at length came, and I was beckoned by a boy, who officiated as usher, into an inner apartment. There I found an elderly man, of sour aspect, seated at a desk. I had stood before him more than a minute ere he condescended to notice me ; and, when he laid his pen behind his ear, and raised his spectacled eyes from a sort of ledger in which he had been writing, he favoured me with a scrutinizing glance, not certainly of the most encouraging description, and asked me, in a harsh and somewhat contemptuous tone, what I wanted ? As brevity is no less essential to business than to wit, I thought to conciliate the crabbed agent by a succinct statement of my views. I told him that I wished for a situation as *valet de chambre*, and that it was immaterial to me whether I served a bachelor or married man ; that I should prefer town to country ; and modestly added, that as

I was a young man, and had never seen service, I should be content with a salary which would suffice to keep me on good terms with my tailor and laundress. I thought it right to mention, likewise, that if the duties of a secretary were to be superadded to those of a valet, I considered myself competent to undertake them, having received a good, and partly classical, education; and gave him to understand, besides, that in seeking a situation of this kind, I rather descended from the line of life in which I had been bred.

Although I did not exactly comprehend the nature of this compliment,* yet the meanness of its description, and the contumelious manner in which it was offered, were not calculated to give me a high idea of its dignity. Determined, however, not to commit myself by losing my temper, I bowed politely, and begged the old gentleman would favour me with an explanation. My coolness inflamed him, and he bade me begone about my business with about the same inflection of voice that you would use to an intrusive dog. I thanked him with a grin for his extreme courtesy, and would have indulged the ironical vein still further; but seeing the old ruffian lay his hands viciously on a ponderous quarto near him, as if he meant to launch it at my head, I was moved by the better part of valour to withdraw abruptly.

When I reached the street, my indignation at the insult I received could no longer be

* A clicker to a slop-shop is probably the dirty Jewish-looking stripling, emblematically clad in the faded relics of dandyism, who is stationed in certain alleys of the city to waylay foot-passengers with importunities to buy and sell old clothes.

repressed, and raged with the greater fury from being disappointed in its legitimate object. I hurried along, with frowning brows and compressed lips, until the stares and sneers of the passers-by reminded me that I was exposing myself. I then recollected myself, and paused to consider what was next to be done. I decided to proceed forthwith to a second Intelligence-office, situated in another quarter of the town. This I guessed to be a superior place to the one I had at first applied to. It had a handsomer appearance, and the waiting-room

I departed, well content to spend another week upon my means, never doubting that within a fortnight I should be in possession of a good berth. During the interval I saw nothing of Tibbetts, who, I therefore presumed, to be in too full employment to find any time for recreation. I consoled myself for the disappointment of his promised visit by the reflection, that as our respective paths in life would probably be wide apart, it might be as well that our friendship should be dropped. I sincerely wished well to the young man, and admitted his good qualities ; but I felt that his manners and conversation were such as precluded the possibility of his ever rising beyond a certain rank in society. Besides, how unbecoming would it be for a scrubby footman to be paying a visit to my lord's gentleman ! What would be thought of such a connection in the housekeeper's room ! What sort of company would the butler and my lady's-maid infer that I had been accustomed to ? Friendship and old fellowship were nothing to the purpose. True, that Tibbetts and myself had once been equals,

—at least in station ; we were now no longer such, in any respect. He had, of his own free-will, descended in life ; I kept my place. What then ? The harmony of society must be preserved. The valet could not be hail-fellow-wall-met, with the liveried lackey.

Thus I reasoned with myself ; and, in pursuance of the conclusion to which I arrived, I determined, in case I should meet Tibbetta, to be very ambiguous about my prospects ; and, when I quitted my lodgings, to leave no clue by which he should be able to find me out.

land, so I repaired forthwith to the residence of a gentleman with a very Don-like, tautological, aristocratic, plebeian commodity of mines. The size of the mansion was calculated to give a large idea of the owner's opulence, and I already congratulated myself on the chance of forming an important item of such an establishment. Well indeed might the clerk have prepared me to find an irregular family; for though the time was past noon when I called, the porter was not yet at his post, and the door was leisurely opened by a housemaid, who, after considerable delay, procured me the attendance of a footman, whose drowsy countenance and dishabille seemed to intimate that he had not long quitted the arms of Morpheus.

Having explained my business to this hopeful domestic, he told me that I could not see his gentleman for three hours at least, as he seldom rose before four o'clock; but in the mean time, if I would do him the honour to breakfast with him, he should be very happy to see me, and the meal would be ready in

less than half an hour. I was not so proud, but that I accepted an invitation so well meant, and couched in such becoming terms, and while John went "to clean himself," I sat down in the dining-parlour. In a few minutes he returned; and, to my surprise, conducted me to a small, but elegantly furnished sitting-room, where was a table spread with a substantial breakfast, consisting of tea, coffee, rolls, meat, malt, and brandy. Without noticing my evident surprise, he begged me to be seated, and gently asked whether I preferred tea or cof-

thirst, my curiosity to fathom the secret of this singular hospitality became so strong, that without hazarding the impertinence of a direct question, I threw out a delicate hint with the view of eliciting information upon the subject. My prince of lackeys took me in a moment, and with a wink and a fore-finger laid significantly against his nose, informed me that the governor did not care to say anything to him, "because," he added, with another wink and nod which were meant to speak volumes, but which I was then so young as not exactly to comprehend, "because he knows as how I'm up to snuff." The context, however, explained this oracular intimation and confirmed my conjecture. "A lecturer at the literary* society of which I'm a member, says in his speech, the other night, says he, 'knowledge is power.' To be sure, I did clap the old boy like a good un for that, it seemed to come home so pat to me ; for if it wasn't for what I *knows* of the goings on of some folks in this house, as shall be nameless, it wouldn't be half quar-

* Qy. literary ?

ter the place that it is to me. Howsoever, as long as Edwards does the civil thing by me, I shan't split. I scorn to do anything unhandsome.

"Oh, I understand now," said I. "Mr. Edwards is the butler."

"Yes, and a devilish good fellow; far be it from me to say anything to the contrary; so let's drink his health." With this he filled out two bumpers of brandy, one of which he tendered to me and the other he tossed off

much more ; for he's a gentleman every inch, that I will say of him, though I've worn his livery these two years, and have never seen the colour of his money yet ; howsoever, all's one for that ; I can't say as I've lost much. Well, as I was saying, the consequence of all this here is, that he ha'n't got a rap. Everything is gone to the Jews, or else spouted ; and when we gives a feed, the plate comes from 'my uncle,' and the 'prentices waits at table, rigged out in the family liveries like fun. Why, bless ye ! if so be as we wasn't in parliament we should be in the Bench now."

This insight into Mr. Hamilton Brown Cavendish Jones Hamilton's *ménage* made me pause, and consider whether it would be advisable for a young man like myself, who had his character to make, to begin his career of servitude in such an establishment. The account which honest John gave of his master's habits of non-payment sunk deep into my mind, and I greatly preferred a place where I should be paid punctually on quarter-day, to the trouble, hazard, and dishonesty of having recourse

to indirect means of obtaining the value of my services. Besides, I did not much like the confusion of ranks which must necessarily prevail in a house, where the butler and the footman were in league with each other. I thanked my friend, therefore, both for his treat and his information, and wished him good day, as I meant to try my luck elsewhere, before I applied for Mr. Cavendish's place. He was so obliging as to express his regret for having frightened me away from the situation; but candidly owned, that he was not surprised that

CHAPTER XIII.

THE next name on my list was Sir Benjamin Moody, Bart. whose residence was Wigmore Street. Thither I repaired forthwith. My knock at the door was presently answered by a middle-aged corpulent footman in a sad-coloured livery, who, if there is any truth in the proverb that the master can be inferred from the man, typified another guess sort of person to Mr. Hamilton Brown Cavendish Jones Hamilton. I sent in the card with which the register-office clerk had furnished me, and was duly introduced to the presence of Sir Benjamin. Sure enough he was a burly old gentleman, very quizzical in his dress and appearance, thus answering the idea which his lackey was calculated to impress. But when he raised his face, there was a sternness

in the piercing black eyes which he fixed upon me, and an expression of sour humour about his mouth that somewhat checked the pert air of confidence I had half assumed. He inquired my business in a forbidding jeering sort of tone, which I did not at all admire. I answered respectfully but firmly, however, that understanding he was in want of a valet, I had taken the liberty of applying for the place. He asked me where I had last served. I replied that I had never yet been in service, and that circumstances had obliged me to seek

This extraordinary question put with perfect gravity puzzled me a good deal ; I could not rightly make out whether Sir Benjamin was a humorist or meant to make a butt of me. But I still adhered to the safe side, and answered politely, " Nobody, sir."

" Then I suppose," pursued the Baronet, " you paper it at night."

This conjecture was the more provoking inasmuch as it was correct. I own that I was such a coxcomb, (it was a wrinkle I had learned from my friend Piminy,) and my silence was no doubt interpreted by Sir Benjamin as a confirmation of his guess.

" Um ! Is there a shirt attached to that collar and wristband, of which you are so prodigal ?"

I could hardly keep my countenance at so strange a question, but I answered in the affirmative. He asked me whether the article of raiment alluded to was borrowed or my own. I assured him that it was my own property, and that I had twelve changes. He stared with a kind of incredulous surprise at

this statement, and told me if I spoke the truth, I ought to be ashamed of my extravagance.

"No valet out of place," said he, "should ever wear body linen ; because of the wear and tear, and expense of washing. When he is in service, he wears his master's, as a matter of course. I 'm afraid you 're not well versed in Swift's directions to servants."

I owned with some diffidence I had never heard of such a book.

"So," cried the Baronet, "you're a pretty

I betook myself to my last chance, a certain Major Swallow who lodged in St. James's. Having sent in my card of introduction, as before, I was admitted, and found in the Major a little man apparently between forty and fifty years of age, whose martial aspect and single eye seemed to denote that he had been in the wars. The direful image of Bellona was reflected in every object in the apartments. Prints of battles and sieges, dying soldiers, and mangled carcasses were stuck upon the walls. A formidable long-sword lay upon the sofa, and the mantel-piece was ornamented with a huge pair of holster-pistols. The major informed me in a sharp short tone, like the word of command, that he wanted a servant to attend him on foreign service. Somewhat alarmed at this intimation, I ventured to inquire whether my duties were to be strictly of a civil nature, and whether he could guarantee my personal safety? The fiery little officer flew into a passion at this proviso, cursed me for a coward, and damned the agent for sending a fellow who had not the soul of a flea.

"Go back," said he, "and tell him to send me a man who understands how to clean arms and accoutrements, and is prepared to meet death any hour of the day."

I required no second bidding to be gone, I was glad to get out of the reach of such a fire-eater, and wondered as I retraced my steps to the register-office, whether this reasonable commander would succeed in finding a person who was content to be shot or run through the body at a moment's warning, for the consideration of some twenty pounds a-year.

at the office. But the truth was, that I found the warmth of my good landlady's hospitality considerably cooled of late. Instead of the good hot joints and savoury hashes, of which I had at first been invited to partake, I was now excluded from the parlour, and obliged to put up with slices near the handle and cold kickshaws, the *débris* of the family dinner. I attributed this change to the appearance of an ill-favoured nephew, who came from the country on a visit to his aunt, and seemed disposed to resent her beneficence to me as an injustice to himself. My worthy hostess herself was one of those weak persons of good instincts, whose opinions and actions are guided by the last speaker. She had now suffered herself to be persuaded that I had been imposing upon her good nature; and, in consequence, gave me to understand that she expected I would provide for myself forthwith, as she had neither the ability nor the inclination to support me in idleness any longer. I resented her caprice so much that I declared I would leave her house immediately, forgetful

that I was without the means of procuring food or lodging elsewhere. The old lady, on her part, was incensed at my intimating such an intention, although it professed to be in compliance with her wishes. She upbraided me with all the bounties she had lavished upon me, and charged my stomach with a capacity for breeding a famine in the land. In short, she neither desired me to stay, nor would her kind feeling permit me to quit her roof until I had secured another shelter.

And now my pride had to struggle between

mortifying communication, but meekly asked his opinion as to what kind of situation I was best adapted for. The clerk hemmed and hawed a good deal, and told me that this was a difficult question to answer, and ended by recommending me to apply for some single-handed place, where my ignorance might be put up with in consideration of low wages. After consulting his book, he sent me to a hotel where an under-waiter was wanted. The hotel, or coffee-house, was in a great thoroughfare at the west-end; and being one of those places where the public coaches pull up, was used chiefly by persons from the country who came up on business. I succeeded in obtaining the situation, but upon very hard conditions — no wages for the first three months, during which my master assured me I should hardly be able to earn my bread, on account of my inexperience in servitude.

CHAPTER XIV.

HERE, then, was a pitiful conclusion to the schemes of my pride and ambition! Instead of being the elegant valet to a nobleman, which my too ardent and partial fancy had depicted me, I was a poor needy garçon at a better

ening circumstances than mine. Upheld by this consideration, and the hope of better fortunes, I applied myself diligently to learn my business, and at the end of the probationary quarter, I had attained to such a degree of proficiency, that my master could not longer withhold from me some remuneration for my services. He fixed my salary, it is true, at a very low rate; but still I accepted it as an advancement in the world, and was, consequently, to that extent satisfied and encouraged. I did not fail to cultivate the opportunities which my situation afforded of filling my mind with ideas of men and things. During the day's attendance in the coffee-room, of course, I heard a great deal of conversation, and a variety of remarks dropped, of which I collected so much, that in a short time I found I had acquired considerable notions of politics, literature, and life. Thus qualified, I began to think of bettering myself, and my laudable ambition was gratified. I obtained a place at one of the most fashionable hotels in St. James's, where I had the honour of waiting

upon officers of the army, minors of great estates, and heirs apparent. I now felt in my proper element, breathing the air of aristocracy. But though I had laboured to make myself acquainted with the fashionable world by the diligent study of all the works upon that subject which I could get hold of, I soon discovered that my reading had afforded me but little practical information. I cannot suppose that these excellent works, extolled in all the newspapers as the mirrors of high life, could have exhibited distorted or unfaithful

ed into the coffee-room with a supercilious air, and spoke to me as if I were a beast, with greater deference than an individual of plain exterior, who addressed me with mildness and civility. The one, strange to say, would be the son of a chandler, while the other would be of the blood of the Howards. I was, sometimes during my noviciate, sorely puzzled to make out the quality of my customer. On one occasion, early in the afternoon, when I happened to be the only waiter in attendance, a fat man walked into the room, and asked me for a glass of brandy and a newspaper. After scanning him with a contemptuous glance, I handed him the greasy journal of the preceding day, and previously taking the precaution to remove some silver articles which lay within his reach, I leisurely went in search of the dram. In ordering it, I gave a hint of my suspicions to the young lady at the bar, who leaning forward, in consequence, to catch a glimpse at the stranger, drew her head back immediately, and informed me with a smile, that it was only the Duke of ——. At the

awful title of royalty, my blood curdled, and such was my confusion mingled with apprehension of his Royal Highness's displeasure, that I could hardly be persuaded to attend his commands. And when I obeyed, I approached the august presence with fear and trembling. But his Royal Highness, without noticing my look of abject humility and contrition, took the glass from the salver, and only requested me to change the paper which I had given him, for one of a more recent date. You may be sure that all the morning journals were

than a Marquess. In pity to my ignorance, the same functionary undertook to enlighten me with respect to the ways of town, and some of the remarkable characters who frequented the hotel. For instance, the heir of a dukedom attired and fashioned like a coachman, was a phenomenon which greatly astonished my weak mind. I had not yet become familiar with that inverted ambition, which aims to descend instead of to aspire — which makes the bosom of the youthful aristocrat pant for the applause of jockeys and grooms, in preference to that of senates and courtiers. All these mysteries of high life, my experienced brother of the napkin fully explained to me. I listened at first with scepticism to his descriptions and anecdotes of the nobility and gentry who frequented the house, thinking it probable that he was attempting to impose upon my ignorance and credulity.

He would fain have persuaded me that the lords, honourables, and exquisites, whom I served, were for the most part little better than swindlers. But bating a little exagger-

ation for the sake of effect, I shortly found that Mr. Drew's representations were not far from the truth. Several of his sketches were corroborated by the conversation of the originals. My theoretical notions of high life were sadly confounded at overhearing an honourable captain boasting of an exploit in horse-dealing, such as "sticking a screw" into some novice for treble his value, by vamping him up so as to make him appear sound, or by the more bold and straightforward method of giving him a false character; or a noble lord exciting the

to authors ; an inferior sort of persons, who obtained a livelihood by the productions of their brains, and were therefore unknown, or at most only tolerated, in good society.

But Mr. Drew repudiated, with some contempt, the supposition that any of the customers of the house got their bread by any such vulgar means.

“No,” said he, “they a’n’t quite so bad as that neither. There’s Mr. B. now, he’s one of the most fashionablest men in Lunnun ; he keeps his house, his horses, and his mistress, yet he haven’t got a penny of property. You wonder how he manages to do the thing, I dare say. The secret of it is this, he’s a capital good hand at play, which brings him in five thousand a-year regular, if it does a shilling. Then again there’s the honourable Mr. C., he owes more than his father ever had ; he must have started last year, if he hadn’t turned radical reformer as they calls it, and so got made member of parliament, by which means, you know, he can laugh at his creditors.”

As he was thus speaking, a young gentleman "dressed in the first style of fashion," and looking altogether not unlike one of the swell mob, entered the coffee-room; and espying my superior, stepped up to him, and drawing him a little aside by the button, addressed him in a tone which, though lowered, was distinctly audible to me.

"I say, Bill, my *dear fellow*, I'm devilish hard up; lend me a pony—pay you in a month, 'pon my soul."

At this application, backed as it was first

sider a little, and the result was that, with apparent reluctance, he consented to accommodate the young peer, for such was indeed his quality. The latter, thus released from immediate need, turned lightly upon his heel, while his friend went to procure the ready. With this he presently returned; and having obtained his lordship's signature to a ready-written bill stamp, he handed him a small parcel of notes, which the thoughtless youth stuffed into his waistcoat pocket without examination, and took his departure.

“Did ye twig that?” said Drew turning round to me. I acknowledged that I had observed, and with no small surprize, the whole transaction.

“That pretty boy,” proceeded the head-waiter, “is heir to an Earl, and thirty thousand a-year; but his grandfather, from whom it comes, took offence at his father for marrying against his consent, and would never see him or any of his children. The father died t'other day, so this un, being the eldest, is my lord, without a shilling in his pocket, ex-

cept a paltry allowance of two hundred pounds a-year which the old gentleman gives him. So it isn't so much the young fellow's fault if he is obliged to borrow."

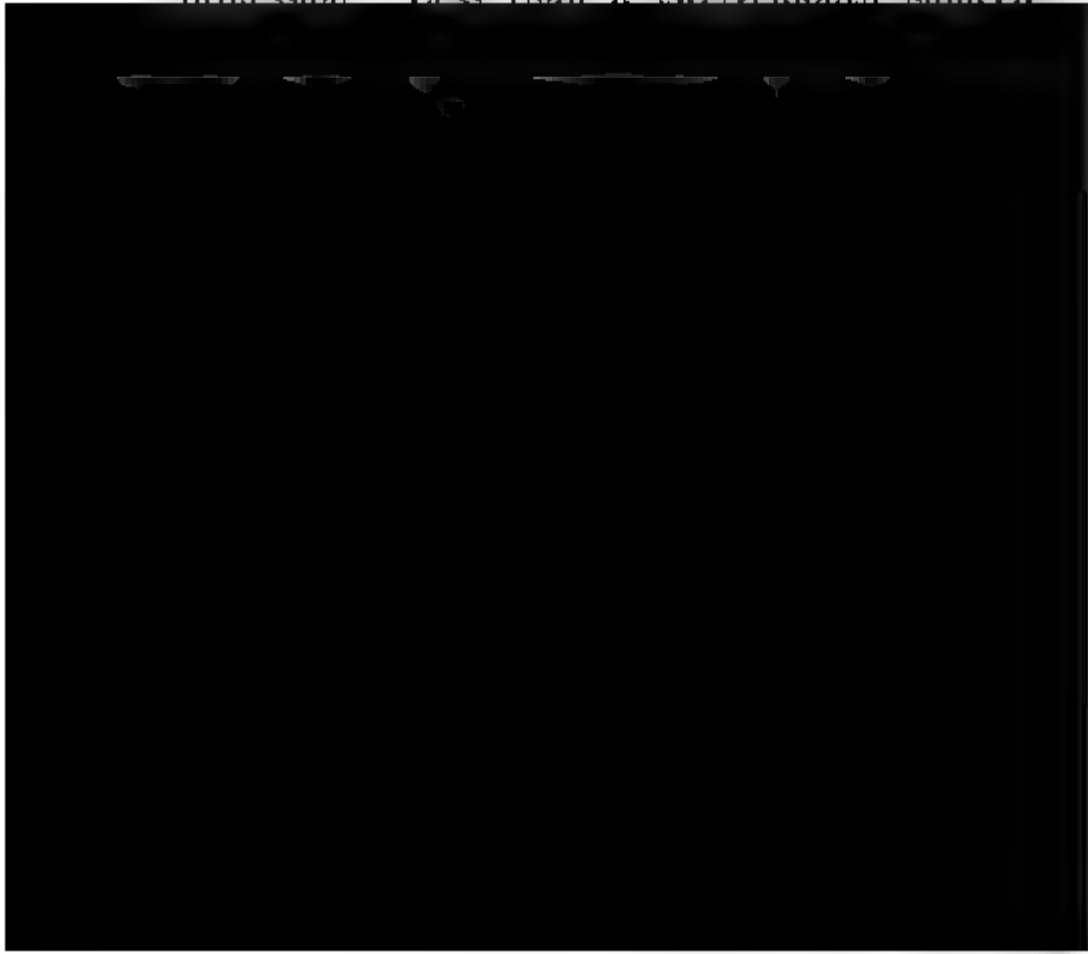
"I suppose," said I, "by your requiring such a bonus for doing his lordship's bill, you don't consider it a particularly good one?"

"There it is, you see," answered Mr. Drew, "when the bill becomes due, he'll want a renewal, which *in course* I make him pay for, besides the interest. Why, I've got acceptances of his already to the tune of four or

upon such ventures. He was likewise a bit of a "leg," and would "accommodate" gentlemen with the odds in ponies, or even rouleaus, upon an "outsider," and would generally sell his "information" at a good price to young sub-alterns of dragoons and dandies fresh from Christ Church or Trinity.

CHAPTER XV.

IN the kindly atmosphere of a fashionable coffee-room my genius throve apace, and in due time I attracted attention as one of the most debonair and intelligent members of my profession. Less than a twelvemonth sufficed



time I mus'n't stand in the way of your bettering yourself. There's a young gentleman of large fortune, just come into his property, who has applied to me to recommend him a genteel young man who knows town, *and is up to the fast thing*, as valet. So I directly thought of you for the situation; and if you like to take it, you've only to say the word."

Of course I thankfully accepted such an eligible offer. "Well then," rejoined my master, "that's a settled thing. If you play your cards well, Simon, you may make a deuced good thing of it. Your new gentleman is quite a young one, only just come of age, and between ourselves seems to have quite as much money as wit. He! he! you take me, eh? When I was about your time of life, I had the luck to step into just such another place, and I can safely say that I had pretty near as much the spending of my master's fortune as he had himself. Therefore, I being a sharpish chap, though I say it who shouldn't, took care to make hay while the sun shined, and small blame to me for so doing, say I,

if any. I don't see why you shouldn't be every bit as fortunate as I was, for you've got plenty of gumption, thank God! Only I say, Simon, don't come it too strong, you know. Mind me, there isn't a more ticklish subject to deal with than a flat. He'll often let you go so far as to put your hand in his pocket pretty near without taking notice, and afterwards upset about some trifle. That's just the nature of the animal. So, whatever you do, take care to keep the shady side of the law, that you may enjoy a safe conscience,

a morning robe of rich saffron-coloured embossed satin ; a Genoa velvet cap, embroidered with gold, adorned his head ; and his feet were shod with slippers of the same costly materials. His occupation was smoking a magnificent pipe, the bowl of which rested on the floor, while the tube was in his mouth. As to the wearer, I cannot say that he reflected any particular grace upon this superb apparel. He was of mean stature, thin, and round-shouldered. His countenance was not to say heavy, but absolutely void of any expression. He did not strike me, either, as being a gentleman of very high breeding. He informed me that I had been recommended to him by Mr. Drew, and therefore he took it for granted that I was competent for the place. He then asked me some questions ; to all which I gave satisfactory answers ;. and, having named his terms, to which I could have no objection, it was arranged that I should enter his service the ensuing week.

In conformity with the usage of my profession, I did not fail to employ the interim in

making inquiries relative to the birth, connections, character, and means of my new master. Upon all these points I succeeded in obtaining more particular information than Mr. Drew could afford. Mr. Davison was the nephew of a Yorkshire attorney, who had amassed a large fortune by questionable practices, and lately dying, had bequeathed the whole of his property, (supposed to be a hundred thousand pounds or thereabouts,) to this young man, whose father was an apothecary in a manufacturing town, and still carried on the business.

His late valet had been summarily dismissed, because he discovered that the man had Yorkshire connections.

It will be perceived from hence, that a better motive than mere curiosity may prompt these investigations of a servant relative to his employer. The above heads were very requisite for me to possess, in order that I might shape my conduct accordingly. The thin-skinned son of a pill-box, elevated by accident above his sphere, probably would require more scrupulous personal respect and attention than a gentleman born and bred; for the one, ever on the watch and the alarm, would be apt to construe that into an offence, which the other would pass unnoticed. A little delicate flattery, likewise, of the gentleman's taste in dress, of his polished manners and stylish turn-out altogether, might perhaps prove acceptable to Mr. Davison; whereas, such suggestions would be repressed as the height of impertinence in a nobleman's valet. My natural tact, aided by observation and the conversation of old

servants, had taught me the value of those nice distinctions ; and I entered upon my new, and somewhat trying situation, with perfect confidence in my own powers of address and management.

CHAPTER XVI.

A YOUNG man of large possessions or prospects, coming to London, need not long languish in obscurity ; he becomes an object of interest in so many different quarters, that his fame is soon up. Fashionable mammas, needy spend-thrifts, tradesmen, and sharpers of every description—all mark him for their prey. Mr. Davison, therefore, soon obtained the notoriety which he coveted. His birth, education, and manners being against him, he did not immediately find access to good company ; but when it was clearly understood that he had five thousand per annum, he was admitted within some of the exterior circles of *bon ton*. My master's vanity was of that unsophisticated sort, that he could be imposed upon by the assiduities of those

who had an obvious and direct interest in engaging it upon their side. Hence his treacherous tailor deluded him with the most extraordinary specimens of apparel ; the perfumer did his best to make him "the rankest compound of villanous smells that ever offended nostrils ;" and the horse-dealer stuck him handsomely with arrant screws. But I determined that it should be my business to put a stop to all this.

Does the candid reader give me credit for a virtuous indignation at seeing unsuspecting innocence thus abused ? Time was when I

ter's interests, and suggested to him the expediency of reposing unlimited confidence in me. To my great satisfaction he took the hint, and avowed his belief that he had hitherto been in the hands of extortioners and rogues. Upon this intimation I went straight to the point, and advised the immediate dismissal of all the former tradespeople ; in the places of whom, I recommended certain acquaintances of my own. These recommendations were in most instances implicitly adopted, the consequence of which was, that I immediately received some handsome compliments, with the understanding that I was to touch a commission upon all Mr. Davison's orders. This, together with the reversion of the cast clothes, and other miscellaneous fallings-in, constituted a tolerable perquisite ; upon a rough calculation, I found that my place would be worth about a couple of hundred a year to me ;—pretty well, you will say, for a young one.

My master soon came to treat me rather as a friend than a mere servant. He opened his heart to me, took my advice, and reposed upon

the soft pillow of my flattery. He was good-natured enough ; but though he usually treated me with the utmost familiarity, he was as tenacious as royalty of any reciprocal freedom on my part.

The only drawback upon my content was, the apprehension that my master might be captivated by some one of those agreeable young ladies, with a little blood in their veins, by whose parents and guardians his society was so much affected. In that event, I feared that I must bid farewell to the fair fruits which I was

the interesting fact. I observed, to my great satisfaction, that though not insensible to the charms of the fair sex, he was rather disposed to be cruel. He seemed to take delight in tormenting the tender victims, by deluding them with hopes which could never be realized. He admitted that he was a lady-killer; but while he strenuously denied that he ever made a deliberate attempt upon the female heart, he certainly let it appear that he sought rather to aggravate than heal the wounds that he had involuntarily made. This propensity, I thought, did not bode matrimony, for which reason, I am ashamed to say, I gave it every encouragement in my power, and by constantly insinuating that a gentleman of fashion and fortune sacrificed half the pleasures of youth by an early marriage, I hoped, if not to postpone the fatal day altogether, at least to stave it off, until such time as I should have realized sufficient to enable me to retire upon a comfortable annuity. What cogent arguments did I not urge against that state which our fair enslavers are wont to call connubial happiness!

“Consider, sir,” said I, “when once you are married, the ladies will no longer pull caps, or die for you ; instead of being ‘the observed of all observers’ you will be voted neither useful nor ornamental. Then madam, if she should happen to be of a loving jealous disposition, will expect you to be always at home, doing Darby and Joan ; and if, on the contrary, she should be fond of *gallivanting*, she will spend half your fortune in milliners’ bills. Consider, sir, the nuisance of having a house full of children, and not being able to go up

tie yourself up, you can ; but if I was a gentleman like you, dash me, if I'd give up my liberty for the handsomest face in Great Britain."

To these representations, which I chose favourable moments for urging, did my master seriously incline. In dwelling upon the charges and privations attendant upon matrimony, I knew that I should touch him in a sensitive part ; for Mr. Davison, though extremely profuse in everything which concerned his own immediate gratification, was altogether as cautious in incurring expenses, from which he was not to reap obvious and direct benefit or enjoyment. I doubt whether he ever bestowed a sixpence in charity, but he would throw away hundreds in a night at the hazard-table. He was a sort of man, who would think little of giving half a thousand for a buggy horse, but a great deal of laying out twenty pounds upon a wife's comforts. Here, then, I fixed him. He acknowledged the force of my reasoning ; and expressed, with an oath, his surprise, that any man of sense could be found soft enough

to marry. I heard this emphatic sentiment with satisfaction, for it seemed to imply that my humble endeavours had made an impression. I knew my young gentleman to be so weak and vacillating, that I could not depend upon him for an hour together unless I succeeded in fastening upon his self-love, which might justly be termed his master-passion.

CHAPTER XVII.

I HAVE said that my master was actuated by the praiseworthy ambition of cultivating the society of his superiors in station. Like a genuine tuft-hunter, he affected a great contempt for rank and title, and, theoretically, was for the abolition of these antiquated distinctions ; that is to say, he was what we call in the present day an ultra-liberal, and had indeed, at one time, entertained serious thoughts of putting up as a candidate for Westminster, but suffered himself to be dissuaded from that project by me, who could not see that any benefit would accrue to me from his squandering his substance on election contests.

Mr. Davison, then finding that the uppermost circles were inaccessible to all his efforts, very naturally came to the conclusion that

they were not worth being acquainted with. The grapes, in fact, were sour. He inveighed against the aristocracy as rotten and despicable, as "the fungus, the wen, the excrescence of society." (These, by the way, were figures which he borrowed from a certain association of patriots to which he belonged.) Yet he found his contempt of the order perfectly consistent with the utmost deference to any individual belonging thereto. High and conspicuous upon the polished surface of the mirror which adorned his mantelpiece, were placed

master into their hands, and which I had only hesitated to do from the apprehension that they would clean him out so effectually as to leave nothing for others. But finding that the acquaintance could not be prevented, I thought it better that it should be made by myself, in order that I might retain a check upon both parties ; for while I gave my master a slight hint to beware of his new friends, I cautioned the latter against proceeding to extremities. Nevertheless they made poor Mr. Davison pay through the nose for the honour of their countenance. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say, that it cost him five hundred pounds to appear arm-in-arm in Bond Street with Lord William A ; and a dinner at Richmond with the Marquess of B. and his friends stood him in not less than a couple of thousands, which the noble party won from him at unlimited loo. Mr. Davison, however, manfully paid the price of being admitted into such good society. His taste was to boast of an intimacy with people of rank, and to call noblemen by their unadorned titles ; and if he was willing to

purchase the indulgence of this whim at a long price, he was, perhaps, not guilty of much greater absurdity than others who gratify their respective fancies at equal cost.

I could not help sometimes feeling some commiseration, not unmingled with compunction, at beholding my master travelling the road to ruin at such a rapid pace ! but I was consoled by the reflection, that, as it was out of my power to stop him, it was useless to inquire whether I had the will, and therefore, that as something was to be gained by for-

tial counsels of my Mentor, the head waiter, had not some concern in deterring me from the latter course ; but as this may be a question not very interesting to the reader, I shall pass to matter of more immediate moment.

From the hells, the transition was obvious to the turf. My master, when the first excitement attendant upon having his name associated with those of the most distinguished in the fashionable and sporting world, had somewhat subsided, began to calculate the outlay which this achievement had cost him, and was both surprised and alarmed at its magnitude. He could not but perceive that his fortune, considerable as it was, must sink under a few more such attacks. He sought, therefore, to place himself on such a footing, that he might have a chance of gain as well as loss. In an evil hour, he was induced, at the expense of several thousands, to become the proprietor of the best horse in England, the winner of the Derby, and the first favourite, to which none could be called so much as second, for the St. Leger. Fired with the fame which attended upon this

celebrated purchase, and with the idea of retrieving all his former losses, and placing more than their amount to his credit by one successful coup, he backed the animal for a prodigious sum. He stood to win about sixty thousand. Under these circumstances, the opposite party, which consisted entirely of "legs" by profession, met together, as I have reason to believe, and decided, that a horse backed to such an extent by a *good man* must not be suffered to win. I did all in my power to detach Mr. Davison from such a perilous venture; but he

was to enter the scales, I thought that the possibility of fraud must be obviated.

Much as I had believed myself to be versed in the trickery of mankind, I had yet to learn the extreme subtlety of that which pervades the turf. Mr. Davison, according to promise, never quitted his horse during the time specified, until he was brought to the post. But what availed this, and all other precautions? The animal was blown before he had run a furlong, and instead of being first, was literally the last ; in short he was distanced.

It was clear that the horse had been tampered with ; and the question by whom was speedily answered. It was agreed, that, as nobody could have got access to the animal without the personal knowledge of the owner, he himself must have poisoned him. Thus the very care which he had taken to guard against both the reality and the suspicion of trickery, redounded upon himself. The premises being taken for granted, the important circumstance of Mr. Davison having laid out an immense sum upon the horse, which must

otherwise have presented an insurmountable obstacle, only served to corroborate the conclusion. It was decided that it had been throughout a settled thing between this adventurer, (so they styled my master,) and the "legs." He was represented as a decoy, set up for the purpose of inducing the public to back the animal, under the impression that he was in the hands of a gentleman. In this manner was my luckless master bereft both of his fortune and character by the same event. I never heard a single individual affect even to

own astonishment and dismay ! for my master had levanted without giving me the slightest intimation of his design. I had paid him the hundred pounds which he had persuaded me to invest in the race ; another sum of a hundred and fifty pounds, which he had borrowed a few days previously, under pretence of being short of cash ; and which I had been, unluckily, able to accommodate him with, in consequence of having recently removed my property from government security with the view of procuring a more profitable investment. These losses made a sad hole in the savings of the two years and a half which I had lived in Mr. Davison's service. I had not, indeed, much more than fifty pounds left, and of this sum I owed almost half.

CHAPTER XVIII.

I WAS soon convinced that any attempt to recover the moneys which Mr. Davison had appropriated, or rather, perhaps, I should say *resumed* (for if the truth must be spoken, my master had, in point of fact, done little more

to give expensive dinners at his tavern ; and if Mr. D. in the hurry of departure, had left a long score unpaid, that was no fault of mine. He lamented that sharps were more abundant than flats, and that I might wait a long time before I met with another such eligible opportunity as that which I had unfortunately lost. I replied that I confided in him to do the best he could for me, and he promised so to do.

He was as good as his word. In a few days he sent for me to advertise me of an excellent vacancy, of which he had just heard. "You recollect," said Mr. S. "young Wainwright?"

"To be sure," answered I ; "he who used to give such bang-up suppers here, two years ago. But I thought he was done up."

"Just so. He owes me four hundred and better."

"Not a shilling of which you will ever touch, sir, I expect," rejoined I.

"Why, I wouldn't have refused a fifty pound bill for the debt a week ago ; but old Wainwright's valet has gone dead since then."

"What has that event to do with your hopes of payment?" was my very natural interrogatory.

"How?—I'll tell you. You must know that this valet had got such an influence over the old gentleman's mind, as to persuade him (so it was supposed) to cast off his navy, and leave all his property to him. Therefore, as soon as young Wainwright heard of the old villain's death, he comes to me, and says he, 'Bill,' says he, 'now 's the time; if we could get hold of my uncle in any way, and persuade

quite in years, and pretty nigh childish ; so that the thing might be very well done by any one who knew how to set about it. Now, one word's as good as a hundred, Simon ; do you think you're up to the place ?— Recollect," added he, impressively, " what important interests is at stake ; so don't you go to take the place, unless you think you can do your duty by your employers ; that is, you know, me and young Mr. Wainwright."

My ambition and cupidity were both a good deal excited by this offer. I had much too good an opinion of myself to feel any considerable hesitation about undertaking a task of such delicacy. I thanked Mr. Drew, therefore, for the confidence which he was inclined to repose in me, and assured him that he would not find it misplaced. The chief difficulty that occurred to me, was, how to secure my engagement with the old gentleman ; since, of course, my recommendation could not come either from Mr. Wainwright junior, or Drew as being probably a known connection of the former. My sagacious patron gave me to understand, that

the obvious objection which I had started had been foreseen, and provided against by him and his debtor. The plan agreed upon by these worthies was, it seemed, that I should offer myself for the place like any other candidate, and that when questioned as to whom I had lately served, I should partly tell the truth, and partly not; namely, that I had formerly lived as waiter at a London hotel, which I had quitted from disliking the racket and irregularity of such a situation; that I had thence passed into the service of Mr. Davison, who

their own for me, should I find it expedient to call upon them to speak to my character.

Thus arranged, the scheme looked feasible. It remained only then that I should communicate personally with Mr. Wainwright junior, for the purpose of coming to an understanding with reference to the *douceur* which I was to receive for my successful services. Mr. Drew urged the necessity of despatch, and spoke rather warmly about doubting the *honour* of the parties concerned; but finding that I was firm to my point, he promised me an interview with his principal that evening.

At the appointed hour I met the young gentleman, who, after some parley, signed and placed in my hands an instrument, by which he was bound six months after the decease of Thomas Wainwright of Harwood, in the county of Bucks, Esquire, to pay me, Simon Wiggins, the sum of one thousand pounds in sterling money of Great Britain, under penalty of forfeiting double that sum. In exchange I gave a memorandum to the effect that the bond

should be cancelled in case the obligee took no benefit by the event which was to give it vitality; an empty form, by the by, since in the contingency alluded to, the bond would probably not be worth the parchment upon which it was engrossed.

With this instrument safe in my pocket, therefore, I set forward to tender my valuable services to the Squire of Harwood, whose town residence was in the vicinity of Berkeley Square. According to my custom of making inquiries respecting a new place for which I was about

fluence over him ; which influence he used for his own purposes, being, likewise, a very great knave. Notwithstanding my self-esteem, I felt some trepidation at the thoughts of appearing before such a discriminating judge ; whose fastidiousness was probably still more refined by age and disease, real or imaginary.

I found that my apprehensions were justified. When I presented myself, the footman, who showed me into a parlour where I was to await the pleasure of Mr. Wainwright, took occasion, before he announced me, to hint that he wouldn't give much for my chance, as his master had already rejected more than a dozen that had offered, and had scarcely even looked at a dozen more. This information, though it helped to keep down my complacency, did not daunt me ; and I waited calmly my expected summons to the formidable presence.

I had not sat many minutes, before a bell rang with a peremptoriness which caused me to form a shrewd conjecture as to the hand

that pulled the string. Presently the same pompous footman who had before advertised me, returned, and requested me to "walk this way." I rose and followed him with a firm step to Mr. Wainwright's study.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN a great leathern arm-chair, drawn close to a fire, though it was the hottest day of September, I found an attenuated figure, wrapped in a flannel dressing-gown. The head which surmounted this living skeleton was, however, very remarkable. It was finely shaped, and the features, which were peculiarly small, seemed to quiver with intellect. The moment I entered the room, I was transfixed (to use the expression) by an eye, of whose piercing glance I had never yet seen the equal. It seemed impossible to shield one's breast against such an inquisitor. In whatever way his late valet had acquired his influence over him, it certainly was not owing to his imbecility.

After scanning me in this manner, he asked me in a sharp impatient tone, whence I came, and what were my qualifications?

I answered with as much brevity, and in as collected a manner as I could. I flattered myself that I could observe in his countenance an indication that my reply was more prompt and to the purpose than he had expected.

"Sir," said he in the same somewhat stern voice, "I am an invalid, and require much irksome personal attention. Are you able and willing to render it?"

I had tact enough to forbear making any exaggerated professions on these points, which, in all likelihood, would have caused me to

scrutiny of this gentleman's quick and powerful understanding. Nevertheless, for want of being prepared with a better, I was constrained to venture upon it. I premised, however, in obedience to Mr. Wainwright's apparent wish, a brief account of my parentage, my education, and start in life under the auspices of Mr. Smallcombe; my being thrown upon London with no guide but my own prudence, (thereby delicately inferring that the latter was none of the meanest,) and my adventures up to the time being, taking care, of course, to omit all those passages which redounded greatly to my discredit.

Mr. Wainwright heard me with the air of one who knew the world too well to believe, in general, more than half of what he heard. I felt, by instinct, that he was not the sort of person before whom it would be safe to parade myself, as an interesting compound of simplicity and intelligence. I therefore made a merit of necessity, and acknowledged to some juvenile foibles.

Without making any comment upon my

story, the old gentleman desired to have specimens of my reading and writing. Having complied with his wish, he expressed himself satisfied with my proficiency in these accomplishments, and then proceeded, in a few words, to describe the capabilities and duties which he required in his personal attendant. Mr. Wainwright's infirmities were so great that he could not move without assistance; his late confidential servant, whatever his moral character, had been, it appears, in education and manners, almost a gentleman, and had de-

He would not permit me to decide presently, but desired that I would take twenty-four hours to make up my mind. I withdrew, therefore, with an intimation to call at the same hour the following day; an unnecessary postponement, since I had no idea of disturbing my mind with a conflict about accepting a situation which offered a salary of one hundred pounds per annum, to say nothing of perquisites and ulterior advantages.

I hastened to apprise the anxiously expecting confederates—I mean, of course, young Mr. Wainwright and Mr. Drew—of my success. They were rejoiced at the intelligence, and were eager to know how I “tackled” the old gentleman. I readily gratified their curiosity and my own conceitedness by a particular account of the interview, in which, however, I will assure you that your humble servant cut no contemptible figure. Indeed, I think the reader must allow that I evinced some little tact and skill. Be that as it may, my employers (so to describe them) were transported with my conduct, and declared that I was

the cleverest fellow in the world ; an asseveration from which I did not even affect to dissent. They dismissed me with fervent and, doubtless, heartfelt wishes for prosperously carrying through the business which I had so auspiciously commenced, and with every incitement that flattery, exhortation, and unbounded promises could supply. But, in truth, I needed none of those, having an all-sufficient incentive in my pocket, in the shape of a certain document, of which mention has been made above. I was old enough to know experimentally the

CHAPTER XX.

TWENTY-FOUR hours sufficed to establish me in my new situation, upon the duties of which I entered forthwith.

Verily, Mr. Wainwright did not exaggerate when he warned me that his valet would enjoy no sinecure. His infirmities were so great that he required constant personal attendance ; I was, moreover, his amanuensis and reader, so that I could scarcely ever be permitted to absent myself more than an hour in the day. My master's temper likewise — naturally, I suspect, not the most even — was sadly fretted by disease, and I, of course, was the obvious butt of its irritability. So much did I find myself harassed, both in mind and body, at the end of the first month, that I should not have hesitated to give warning,

had it not been for the consideration adverted to at the close of the last chapter. I decided that the difference of wages was not an equivalent; and subsequently I began to calculate seriously, whether it was worth while to sacrifice one's health and spirits on account of a consideration which depended upon a contingency, so remote and uncertain; for, though ever on the watch, I had not yet observed an opportunity of adverting to the important matter in which I was so deeply interested.

Mr. Wainwright was not a person upon

nation, when my master in an interval of something, which if not exactly ease and good-humour, was the nearest approach I had ever seen him make to that enviable state, let drop, partly in reverie, and partly as though addressed to myself, an ambiguous expression, which had the instantaneous effect of reviving my drooping spirits; for it seemed to let light into a speculation which had recently much agitated my breast, namely, whether I was at all concerned in a certain private interview lately held between Mr. Wainwright and his solicitor, and which interview I shrewdly suspected had relation to his last will and testament. However, this word, slight and enigmatical as it was, sufficed to bear me up under another six months of unremitting devotion, and habit had by that time rendered my service less distressing.

More determined than ever then to go through with it, especially as my master's tenure of life was supposed to be growing daily more precarious, I sought to extract what consolation I could from the dull and barren

existence which might perhaps be for some time my lot. I betook myself to the improvement of my mind ; a disposition of which Mr. Wainwright was pleased to approve, and even condescended to direct my selections from the well-filled shelves of his library. Of course I implicitly adopted his recommendations, though some of the works which he prescribed were not much to my taste, being treatises on moral philosophy and metaphysics. Nevertheless I devoured these insipid morsels with as much avidity and apparent relish as if they had been

frequently a good deal of instruction and entertainment from listening to their conversation. Mr. Wainwright would sometimes become animated by this society, and express himself with much effect ; his remarks were usually of a dry, humorous, and sarcastic character. I believe he was considered very cynical and splenetic, and indeed he seemed to me often to evince more disgust than the occasion demanded. He was sadly intolerant of dulness in any shape ; but when, to use his own illustration, the grub took the form of the butterfly, it became the object of his extreme antipathy. Or like an epicure who can sometimes relish a homely joint, but rejects the vile compounds of vulgar cookery, so Mr. Wainwright, though of highly cultivated literature and fancy, could enjoy the conversation of a plain man of sense, while he abhorred that of "a proud, conceited, talking spark," who would sometimes affect the witty and profound. My master was not one of those happy tempers that can convert such subjects into food for ridicule and amusement ; on the contrary, they

caused painful irritation to his delicate and fastidious taste. I recollect on one occasion a noble lord, an old acquaintance of Mr. Wainwright's, bringing his son to introduce him to that gentleman.

The young Lord had distinguished himself at the University, published a volume of poetry in his eighteenth year, and had made several splendid speeches in parliament before he was twenty-two. No wonder that he was advertised as a great genius, the hope and pride of the literary and political world. In an evil

inclined him rather the other way. When, therefore, Mr. Wainwright perceived the purpose for which the nobleman above-mentioned had brought his "talented" son, namely, to receive the tribute of Mr. W's. applause, that eccentric old gentleman conceived the amiable design of tendering a stone instead of the expected bread; in other words, to give his noble friend to understand that he considered the hopeful youth as neither more nor less than a precocious empty coxcomb: and this design he failed not to execute after his usual caustic fashion; for, when the peer presented his son, with a degree of emphasis which seemed to call for a corresponding degree of *empressement* on the part of the presentee, Mr. Wainwright acknowledged the compliment with a very slight inclination, and turning away immediately addressed his conversation to the elder of his visitors, scarcely vouchsafing to listen to the epigrammatic remarks which the young Lord, accustomed to an applauding audience, confidently put forth. (But that I may not take more credit than I am entitled

to, I must confess, I should in all probability have thought his lordship a prodigy of wit and wisdom, had I not observed the contempt in which my master held him.) The old peer, however, took care not to lose a word which fell from his son's lips, upon which he might be said to hang with perfect deference. Whenever those lips were opened, he turned abruptly from Mr. Wainwright, even though that gentleman was in the act of speech, and once, in his eagerness to catch the precious dogmas of the young oracle, he positively checked my

posities, and exposing the paltry tinsel with which it was paraded. To heighten his discomfiture, during the operation, some visitors were announced, who afterwards acknowledged that they were then cured of a temporary delusion in which they had participated. Whether this was the first rent made in the lion's hide, which covered the ass's skin, I cannot pretend to say; but there is no doubt that the public very soon after detected the imposture, and consigned the animal back to his proper place in the creation.

CHAPTER XXI.

My worthy confederates and employers, Messrs. Henry Wainwright and William Drew, to wit, were incessant in their tender inquiries after the old gentleman's health, and the progress of my amiable endeavours to effect

I had not yet found an opportunity of stirring in that matter. I knew not what sort of influence his last valet might have possessed ; but I could see nothing in Mr. Wainwright to encourage me in the hope that I might, with any degree of safety, presume to touch upon such a delicate point. Nor did my own interests prompt me very powerfully to make the rash attempt. It appeared to me, that the surest game to play, as far as self was concerned, was to let things take their own course, in which case, I might feel pretty sure of a handsome remembrance, while, by endeavouring to turn them into another channel, I might indeed gain a thousand pounds, but the probability was that I should lose everything. Moreover, I was by this time pretty well reconciled to the hardships of my place, by the bounty of my master, who, notwithstanding the high salary I received from him, very plentifully rewarded my devotion with valuable presents, which besides being immediately acceptable, I could not help regarding as earnest of his posthumous liberality. Nor was I much discouraged by

the opinion which the medical gentleman had whispered respecting my master's longevity; for I considered it possible, that in that case "the wish might be father to the thought," since a man would naturally be rather reluctant to anticipate an early cessation of an income of three hundred and sixty-five guineas per annum, earned by a daily visit of about ten minutes' duration. It appeared to me therefore, that my poor master's friends might still look to an early release from his sufferings. And so it happened: he was seized in the

it was but fair that he should have the sole superintendence of his exit from life ;—a remark quite in accordance with the character of a humorist, which the old gentleman had always affected. His worldly affairs having been all previously settled, he awaited death with great composure ; and, as he expressed no wish for spiritual consolation, none of us cared to introduce a clergyman into his presence. This must be regarded as one of his singularities, for he was well-known to be a sincere Christian. He retained his mind to the last ; and an hour before his death, made a dry remark upon one of his nurses, at which I could not forbear a smile.

The day after my master's decease, all parties concerned assembled at his house for the declaration of his will. Mr. Henry Wainwright, his nearest blood relative, attended with deep anxiety as to the result. In case he should be declared his uncle's heir, which might I thought be very possible, I took the precaution, with a view to the consideration of a certain bond which I held, to intimate to the young

gentleman that I had done my best on his behalf, although, as the reader is aware, I had not stirred an inch in the matter. But I satisfied my conscience on the score of this fraud, by the plea that in not naming the nephew to his uncle, I had, in fact, best consulted his interests. Such an apology may not perhaps be equally satisfactory to others; yet I think it must be admitted, at least, that my conduct in this instance involved a point of casuistry.

To return to a more important subject—

property, in manner following:—His landed estates he devised to trustees for the benefit of a certain learned body; after which, he proceeded to dispose of his personal property. “To my nephew, (here the party referred to, whose visage had by this time become sadly elongated, showed some symptoms of vivacity,) “to my nephew, Henry Maximilian Wainwright who, could he have conducted himself with common propriety, would have been my principal heir, I bequeath the interest of five thousand pounds three per cent consols for the term of his natural life; after which the principal sum, or such proportions of it as may be needed for the purpose, to be applied to the liquidation of the said H. M. Wainwright’s debts, not exceeding twenty pounds each, with compound interest from the date hereof; the decision of all such claims to belong solely to my executors, or their representatives. As to the other creditors of my nephew, who, I am credibly informed, have already sent in bills to the amount of ten thousand pounds and upwards, they probably had good reasons for

admitting an ensign in a marching regiment so deeply into their books; and if they gave such large credit on a remote and uncertain speculation, they cannot, as gamblers, feel themselves entitled to be placed on a footing with tradesmen. I leave them, therefore, as far as I am concerned, to such redress as they may derive from the honour of the said Mr. Henry Wainwright."

Here that young gentleman, having thus heard to an end all that seemed to concern him, made a single remark not very respect-

fourth part of my Bank Stock, value about two thousand pounds; a sum, which, as her wants are few, and as her thoughts are, I am convinced, raised far above the low desire of earthly riches, will, I doubt not, enable her for the rest of her days to indulge in spiritual meditations undisturbed, as they have heretofore too frequently been by household cares. To my cousin, Mrs. Hannah Stokes, I bequeath a like sum; which I fear she will think a poor recompense for the many professions of love and respect which she has lavished upon me, ever since I had the misfortune to lose my wife and child;—I am sorry that I cannot afford to put a higher price upon those favours. To my cousin and godson, the Honourable Ferdinand Adolphus de Courcy, lieutenant in his Majesty's — regiment of Hussars, I also bequeath a fourth share of my Bank Stock, the yearly interest arising from which will probably suffice to keep his whiskers and mustachios, which most important part of his appointments, I think I have understood him to say, could be maintained for

something less than a hundred pounds per annum. And whereas many persons have done me the honour to claim consanguinity to me, I desire that the remaining portion of my Bank Stock may be divided, share and share alike, among such of my relations, (excepting only my cousin, once removed, Mr. John Hancocks, surgeon, of Russell Street, Bloomsbury,) as can establish their kindred to me within the fourth degree."

Here the solicitor was obliged to make a pause, being interrupted by a laugh of deri-

done with his India Bonds ; they ought to be worth fifty thousand at least."

"My India Stock, value thirty-six thousand pounds, more or less, I give and bequeath to my cousin, Mr. John Hancocks, aforesaid for his sole and absolute use and benefit. I distinguish Mr. Hancocks by this mark of my esteem, because he has preferred seeking a fortune through the means of an honourable profession, rather than by cajolery, adulation, and hypocrisy ; and though never deficient in respect towards me, has always borne himself in my presence as an upright, independent man ; and because, also, I truly believe that he never expected to reap any pecuniary advantage from my death, and that he would have been incapable of endeavouring to secure such advantage to himself by any underhand double-faced conduct. For these reasons, I desire his acceptance of the above bequest, with my best wishes that it may be instrumental to his welfare and happiness."

He then proceeded to dispose of his books, pictures, manuscripts, &c. ; and charged his

residuary estate with a year's wages to each of his servants, over and above their current dues, and a sum of two hundred pounds to his valet, Mr. Simon Wiggins; "a young man," he was pleased to add, "of manners and intelligence above his years and station."

Nothing could exceed the astonishment, rage, and vexation of the various cousins at the good fortune of Mr. Hancocks, who, in all likelihood, never dreaming that he could be a party concerned, was not present on this occasion; perhaps, indeed, might hardly yet be apprised of

to take a very magnanimous tone, and refuse to accept the paltry legacies assigned them ; but I learned upon subsequent inquiry, that each of these injured relatives had drawn every shilling to which he or she was entitled under Mr. Wainwright's will. None of the same persons, however, who were devoted to him in life, paid his memory the compliment of following his remains to the grave. Mr. Hancock, who heard of his good fortune with real surprise, and was much affected by the manner in which he was named, attended the funeral as chief mourner, and many of the distinguished friends of my late master anxiously applied for permission to testify their respect on this solemn occasion.

Such was the end of Mr. Wainwright ; a gentleman for whom, notwithstanding his harsh and eccentric manners, I could not help feeling perfect respect, not unmingled with admiration. I received, without repining, the legacy with which he had been pleased to mark his sense of my services, although from his known liberality and wealth, I had certainly calculated

upon a larger sum ; but mercenary as I may be considered, I did not lightly value the handsome mention of my name which accompanied the bequest. It is, perhaps, needless to mention that I abstained from making an attempt, which would have been, under existing circumstances, alike vain and unjust, of exacting from Mr. Henry Wainwright satisfaction for his bond. Indeed, that young gentleman, twenty-four hours after the publication of his uncle's will, was found, by certain anxious inquirers, to be extremely scarce, and, I believe,

CHAPTER XXII.

I HAD no difficulty in obtaining a new situation ; for more than one gentleman was desirous of securing my services, so much had I been noted for my superior qualifications during my attendance upon Mr. Wainwright. Finding myself in such request I became nice, and thought scarcely any place good enough for me. While I was deliberating, I lost two or three eligible openings, and at length made my election to the post of butler in the establishment of a distinguished and wealthy member of parliament, who had charmed me by the liberality of his sentiments. This gentleman was, indeed, a great patriot ; he had not taken up the popular cause from caprice or vanity, but upon deliberate conviction ; for he had been originally a Tory, and an active

supporter of that faction, both with tongue and pen; but having been refused an appointment of considerable trust, which was bestowed upon a young Lord, whose family influenced four votes in the House of Commons, he was so much disgusted at this most flagrant instance of merit being postponed to jobbery, that he immediately carried the whole weight of his vote, character, and talents over to the opposition, and became ever after one of the most eloquent advocates of Reform in Parliament, &c.

Mr. Fosberry, who wished to be thought

what were my politics, just as some old fashioned persons still think it necessary to inquire about a servant's religion before they engage him ; and when I assured him that they were decidedly opposition, he expressed himself satisfied, and informed me that he employed no person who was not on the right side.

I congratulated myself on serving a gentleman who would not consider me his inferior; instead of a proud aristocrat, who regards his menials as scarcely partaking of the same flesh and blood as himself. Perhaps the reader may think I expected Mr. Fosberry to call me from behind his chair to take a seat at the board ; but I was really very far from entertaining such extravagant notions, which, whatever might be said about the natural equality of mankind, I had wit enough to know were impracticable in any civilized society. I only calculated upon not being used merely as a machine for my master's convenience or pleasure ; I doubted not that my own comfort and happiness would be considered, and that as an upper servant, some latitude would

be allowed me for the indulgence of my particular tastes and amusements.

My most sanguine expectations seemed likely to be realized. Mr. Fosberry condescended, in the most gracious manner, to say when I entered upon my office, that he believed he had at length found in me a person in whom he could safely repose confidence. My assiduous and respectful conduct when serving a capitious selfish tyrant, so he was pleased, adopting the common report, to qualify my late worthy gentleman, had impressed him with

it supposed that I countenanced indiscriminate imposition. There is surely some difference to be observed between an easy, confiding, generous gentleman, and a close-fisted hunk, or a spendthrift. I should esteem it almost a laudable endeavour to extract from the miser some of his probably ill-gotten and certainly ill-used riches, and I could see little harm in diverting a part of the wasteful profusion of the prodigal, to the irrigation of one's own little estate. The reprobation, therefore, which I expressed at the frauds of Mr. Fosberry's former butlers, was perfectly sincere, as was the assurance which I gave him that he should have no cause to regret having placed trust in me. Thus admonished, I entered upon the duties of my situation.

Being of opinion that reform, like charity, should begin at home, my first act of authority was to examine into the state of the household, shrewdly guessing that if the heads had been corrupt, the subordinate members were probably not immaculate. Ye gods ! what discoveries I made ! The housekeeper, who was

no better than she should be, proposed terms of accommodation, but I rejected her offers with disdain, in consequence of which she tendered her resignation. I found, in the first place, that most of the male and female servants of the establishment were joined in the bands of unlawful love. I hastened to report specially these immoral proceedings to my master, who listened to the communication with a phlegm which I had not anticipated. When I had finished the details of evidence, positive and circumstantial, upon which my information

ligion and morality to be merely pharisaical and hypocritical ; and as to the Society for the Suppression of Vice, it was the object of his particular ridicule and hatred. I took nothing therefore but plenty of ill-will by this motion, and determined consequently to concern myself no farther with the continence of Mr. Fosberry's domestics ; but that they should not triumph over me, I scrutinized their morality in other respects with double vigilance ; I docked their perquisites, their cheese parings and candle ends, with unrelenting severity, for which acts of fidelity to my employer, I incurred their vigorous hatred. But what cared I for that, when sustained by an approving conscience ?

As my master entertained a good deal of company, I had not of course much time to myself ; but I did not repine, looking forward to my relaxation during the recess. There are drawbacks upon every situation in life, and I must own I could have wished that my talents had been exhibited to better judges than usually assembled at our house. Mr.

Fosberry was certainly not one of the exclusives; his company were by no means of the most select description. As he professed to be a political leader, he was perhaps obliged occasionally to receive at his table persons of middling and questionable station; but I could not understand that it was necessary habitually to entertain such guests. Our parties generally consisted of radical members of parliament, spouters at cockney meetings, authors, artists, playwrights, and miscellaneous persons, hanging loose upon society. These gentry in re-

a great popular question, and several of the speeches on the right side were highly lauded, for the artful purpose, it would seem, of enhancing the praise which was afterwards lavished upon Mr. Fosberry's oration.

"He hit the Secretary deuced hard there," says one, commenting upon the said "splendid speech" in detail, and in that style of flattery which speaks of the object present in the third person; "he was regularly hung upon the horns of a dilemma, and hadn't a word to say."

"Yes, yes," answers his neighbour, to whom this remark was addressed, "you're right, Briggs; I don't think I eversaw a thing better done, and I can recollect Fox."

"All I can say is," observed another of the company, with his mouth full of venison, "I should have been devilish sorry to be the minister who had to answer such a speech."

"I should think you would," cries a fourth, "and P—— (naming the leader of the House of Commons) seems to have been pretty much of the same opinion. They tell me he was

quite agitated while our friend was on his legs."

"Sir," said Mr. Briggs, "you are correctly informed; I was under the gallery, and sat right opposite to him. He wriggled himself about and couldn't sit still a moment under our honourable friend's stricture; he seemed quite to writhe under it."

"Come," said Mr. Fosberry, who had listened very complacently to these remarks, "you overrate my humble endeavours. Take a glass of champagne, Briggs."

This opinion was corroborated by several voices simultaneously ; and having thus set the ball going again, the modest host returned to his mutton ; only giving his guests a little assistance when they set to work, quoting and criticising some of the best passages in his oration. An author, who was present, discovered a resemblance between parts of this celebrated piece of eloquence and the style of Demosthenes. Mr. Briggs and the Secretary of the Grand Central Metropolitan Parliamentary Candidates' Association, came to the conclusion before the cloth was removed, that they must have Mr. Fosberry at the head of a Liberal Administration, and the noble Lord whom scandal said was in the habit of receiving pecuniary benefactions from Mr. F., leant forward after his sixth bumper of champagne, and assured his host with faltering accents, that he should be happy to afford his humble support, either *in* or *out* of the cabinet, to any government of which he might become a member.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A GREAT proportion of Mr. Fosberry's wealth was devoted to the service of his country. Was any candidate in the people's interest for the honours of legislation in want of the sinews of war, his committee might apply to

year, I have good reason to believe that Mr. Fosberry opened his purse to a number of persons who, having nothing particular to do, employed their leisure in recommending ultra-radical theories of politics. The world, which is ever more ready to censure than to approve, did not fail to find fault with my master, because he gave no assistance to some near relatives who happened to be struggling with penury ; as if the good of one's country in the mass were not a consideration far superior to the narrow claims of private benevolence ! Eminent public characters must lay their account with being subjected to calumny as well as animadversion, and Mr. Fosberry had to endure a full share of both. He was accused of being a tyrannical landlord, an unrelenting creditor ; and old stories were ripped up of his conduct to women with whom he had been concerned ; all which charges and stories were doubtless much exaggerated beyond the truth, if not altogether weak inventions of the enemy. Nay, the malice of faction went so far as to sneer at Mr. Fosberry, on account of the way in which his father was

supposed to have made his money, as if that, however disreputable, could be any just cause of reproach to the son. Yet I have heard many an impertinent caviller make observations to the effect, that as old Fosberry had acquired the main of his riches by cheating the revenue, and abusing the confidence of his official superior, it was but just that the present man, had his professions of public morality been sincere, should have commenced his career of patriotism by disgorging a portion of his wealth into the public coffers: an absurd and even

substantial causes for this disgust. In the first place, I was not in my capacity of house-steward allowed a sufficiently easy intercourse with my master's banker ; consequently, I was often annoyed by applications from petty tradesmen for the settlement of their small accounts, which for some time I paid out of my own pocket, for I could not brook that any gentleman I served should be subjected to the saucy observations of such people ; but the butcher, the baker, and the grocer, who had likewise scores of long standing, became at length clamorous for payment, and would listen no longer to the evasions, excuses, and cajoleries with which I had for some time past amused them. The servants even, over whom I had never been able to exercise that despotic authority which ought to be vested in a major-domo, became more negligent, debauched, and insolent. When I threatened to lodge a formal complaint against them for their bad conduct, they only laughed, and observed that this was Liberty Hall, presuming I knew upon the sup-

position, that it would not be convenient to dismiss them, in consequence of their being owed long arrears of wages.

From time to time, I had attempted to intrude upon Mr. Fosberry some details relative to his domestic affairs; but unfortunately I always happened to choose a time when he was occupied about state affairs, and could not, of course, stoop from thence to the low details of housekeeping. I begged him to name any half-hour that he could spare from his important avocations, to the examination and adjust-

strate with them. My expostulations were received with clamour and derision ; and despair having now liberated them from all restraint, the long-cherished hatred of these vulgar minds was let loose upon me in a flood of abuse and slang. I shall not stain my page, or offend the eyes of the condescending reader, with any of their foul language, which of course I was above retaliating.

I repaired immediately to Mr. Fosberry to request an audience. I found him busy writing ; and when I made my appearance, he laid down the pen with an impatient gesture and exclamation, and asked me what the devil I wanted now ? I perceived that this was none of the *mollia tempora fandi* ; but the exigency was too pressing to admit of my paying any regard to this discouragement. I began, therefore, by saying, that it was my painful duty to communicate — when Mr. Fosberry somewhat uncivilly interrupted me, by desiring that I would tell him at once, in plain terms, what was the matter, as he had neither time, nor inclination, to listen to my *jaw* (such was

the vulgar expression he made use of). I obeyed his commands, however, and apprized him without circumlocation of the discontent which existed in his household; and was proceeding accurately to recount the scurrility with which I had been assailed, when my master, who was in a very bad humour, again broke out with a most unmerited reproach, which he had repeated on former occasions, that I was always quarrelling with the servants. I did not lose my temper at this accusation. I only bowed, smiled, and observed "that

months, and had not yet received the slightest hint having reference to the payment of my salary, and that I had disbursed out of my own pocket, on sundry occasions, the aggregate amount of thirty-seven pounds, sixteen shillings, and two pence, in discharge of small claims upon Mr. Fosberry, this conduct of his was, to say the least, cool, and indeed somewhat alarming. I began to quake for my own dues, both money lent and stipend; and prompted by this apprehension, I spoke up more boldly than I should otherwise have cared to do in Mr. Fosberry's present temper. I told him respectfully, but firmly, that I must have a definite answer to carry to the tradesmen and servants; otherwise, the house would be cleared before the evening; "for," added I, "they are determined to stand it no longer."

This resolute manner produced its effect upon my master; who, discharging from his countenance all signs of wrath, became in a moment quite placable.

"Well, well," said he, "I was hasty. Tell the rascals I will settle with them in a few

days; or stay, how much do you think will satisfy them for the present?"

I repeated that the immediate claims upon him furnished to me, amounted to about six hundred pounds.

"The devil!" exclaimed my master; "you could not have come at a more unfortunate time; but I suppose I must do something to keep them quiet." So saying, he took a banker's check-book from a drawer, and to my great satisfaction wrote and handed me a draft for two hundred pounds. "There,"

and assured him that I had never lived with any other than gentlemen of fashion and fortune, and that I hoped I knew better than to trouble any gentleman with paltry duns, as a proof of which I took occasion to specify the several small sums I had paid on his account. But in justification of myself, I added, that the claims which I had been reluctantly compelled to press upon his attention, were of some magnitude and standing. I begged leave to observe, that most of the servants wages were in arrear a twelvemonth, and that the butcher and baker had not been paid for nearly two years.

“ Well, well,” said my master, “ I don’t want to hear it all over again. You’ve got some money and there’s an end of it. Now go about your business.” So saying he resumed his pen and I withdrew.

CHAPTER XXIV.

You may be sure I lost no time in presenting the check for payment; and the first purpose to which I applied the cash was the liquidation of my own claim in full, both for salary and moneys advanced, together with interest

regular place. But before I decided upon taking this step, I thought I would drop a call upon my friend Mr. Drew, whom I had not seen since my late master's death, and ask his opinion upon the subject. That gentleman received me rather coldly, from an opinion, as I soon learned, that I had not acted quite honourably towards him and young Mr. Wainwright in my late engagement. I took pains to disabuse him of this prejudice, and he was, or affected to be, satisfied with my explanation. I then opened to him my present situation, and asked his advice with every mark of deference to his judgment.

Mr. Drew, in the first instance, blamed me for having departed from a general rule which he had inculcated, of never applying for a place before I had inquired the character of the house.

"I am glad," said he, "that you have suffered for your carelessness; it will make you more cautious another time; there's nothing like a practical lesson to you young uns. Why it's almost enough to ruin your prospects in life, having been at Fosberry's place."

"You don't say so," cried I not a little alarmed; "is there anything against him then, beyond his not paying his bills?"

"No, no, that isn't what I allude to. Far be it from me to reproach a gentleman (who is a gentleman) with his misfortunes. It's the vulgarity of the thing that I complain of. You might as well have gone and damned yourself at once by living with an alderman in the city, or a judge in Bloomsbury. What nobleman or gentleman, do you think, would take you from such a place as Fosberry's,

Fosberry, in the most ungentlemanlike manner, accuses his servants of cheating, if they should happen to help themselves a bit ; and I know that he lately had his under-butler up before Sir Richard on a charge of grabbing some plate, which it turned out the poor fellow had only kept in his hands, in case he couldn't get his wages."

To all this I could not but assent. What would my friend have said had he known me for a reformer of abuses, an enemy to perquisites and pickings ! He would surely have given me up for lost. But knowing his prejudices on this head, I had taken care in the account which I gave him to suppress those particulars ; and indeed I myself began to doubt that such proceedings were either profitable or thankworthy. At least I determined to be very cautious in future how I affected to be wiser or honester than my brethren.

I thanked Mr. Drew for his good advice, by which I resolved to profit, and took my leave with many assurances of my high consideration, which were so graciously accepted

that my kind friend promised me his services in recommending me to a new situation.

On my return home, I found that a crisis had taken place during my absence. The officers of justice were in the house, and had already made some progress in executing a writ against Mr. Fosberry's effects. I was not surprised at this event; my only wonder was that it had not taken place before! Under these circumstances, I did not think it necessary to observe ceremony, but retired as soon as I could be allowed to appropriate my move-

CHAPTER XXV.

As there appeared to be no present prospect of my being able to obtain a footing in any higher walk of life, I made up my mind to servitude, pretty much on the principle of the canny Scot, who having in vain applied to his countryman in office for a post under government, at length lowered his importunities into a request of the reversion of his lordship's wearing apparel. I sent in my name, therefore, for admission to *The Society*; an institution established for regulating the supply of male domestics to the aristocracy, and for protecting the interests of that important class. Mr. Drew, who had for many years held a seat in the directory of the Association, and was made an honorary member on his recent disqualification by becoming master of a house,

had urged me in the first instance to belong to it, and I had held back only because I was undecided as to my future course of life.

Now that I had resolved upon seeking a situation in a good family, there remained for me no choice but to enrol myself as a member of this body; for though some few ill-advised persons had from time to time endeavoured to act in defiance of it, with or without temporary success, they were sure in the end to be put down or to conform to its rules and regulations. I was furnished with a printed

betting. I was asked a few questions as to my experience in servitude, and the interior economy of the several families in which I had lived. Having answered these inquiries apparently to the satisfaction of the querists, I was dismissed with the promise of a favourable report to the Central Committee who would probably pass me on the next board-day, which was Saturday.

I duly presented myself on the day named at the tavern in Mount Street, where the Committee sat. I found a large room filled with about fifty or sixty people, ten of whom were seated at an oblong table, a portly elderly gentleman in black filling the chair, opposite to whom sat a less imposing person with two huge volumes and writing materials before him. These were the board, the president, and the secretary, the rest were private members of the Association or novices like myself, waiting for admission to the fraternity. I saw several of these passed, each of whom was required to promise obedience to the laws and directions, and to consult and promote the interests of the

Society. My name was at length called, and I advanced to the table. The secretary having read the minute of the District Committee :—

“It appears, Mr. Wiggins,” said the chairman, after consulting for a few minutes in an under tone with several members of the board, “that you have filled no less than three different situations in this city in contempt of the privileges of this body, which privileges are constituted for the benefit of its members, and of the public at large. This contempt I need perhaps hardly tell you is a very high

gent consideration on the ground that you were undecided in your views, and that he himself took it upon him to recommend you to two of the situations which you held. The third you obtained without his sanction, and I have reason to believe it is one of those which has been for some time under the interdiction of this society. Mr. Secretary, please to refer to the book, and read the entry 'Fosberry.'"

The secretary opened one of the huge volumes which lay before him ; and having found the page, ran his finger down.

"There are three entries, sir, under that name,

" 'Fosberry, the honourable George,'

" 'Fosberry, Admiral Sir Charles,'

" 'Fosberry, Thomas, Esquire.' "

"Read that, sir," said the chair.

" 'Fosberry, Thomas, Esquire. Three black crosses. House-steward, Henry Englefield, resigned for non-payment of salary, for interference in the cellar department, and for general deficiency in the style and appointments.

Under-butler, Robert Standage, charged at Bow Street with embezzling plate; charge dismissed. Several private gentlemen of the establishment report salaries in arrear and second table very scaly. Ordered that no member of the Society or other person do accept office in this household until the pleasure of the Board be further signified.' "

"You hear, Mr. Wiggins," said the chair, "you have thus, as far as in you lay, rendered the order of the Board in this instance void and of none effect. But in consideration of

upon *Mr. Bomford*, who said* he rose with great pleasure to move that the order which it had been his unpleasant duty some weeks since to propose, and which had been carried without opposition, namely, that the gentlemen of the whip should be precluded from entering the service of the Marquess of Newbury, be now rescinded. The Association would recollect that, on moving the order, he had fully entered into the circumstances of the case.

The gist of it was simply this.—The Marquess had interfered in his stable, had required his services at irregular hours, and for irregular business. He had, therefore, thought it his duty to the body of whose interests he was an humble, but zealous representative, to resign his seat on the bench of his lordship's chariot, and lay the circumstances before that Association. The result of that appeal was known, and he had the gratification of stating

* The debates in this, as in other assemblies, not being always conformable to grammatical purity and lucid order, I have, after the manner of the reporters of such other assemblies, endeavoured to supply these requisites wherever they seemed to be wanting.

that the order of the Association had been fully enforced, and eventually crowned with complete success. (Hear, hear, hear!) He was proud to say that not a single member of the profession to which he had the honour to belong, had offered to the Marquess of Newbury. (Loud cheers.) That nobleman and his family had for three weeks been forced to use a hackney coach; (hear, hear!) and at length brought a man from the country to put upon his box. What was the result? Why the very first time his lordship's carriage went to the Opera

demands; and has promised to abstain from further encroachment on the undoubted privileges of the bench. (Loud cheering.) "I move, therefore, that the order of the 15th of April be rescinded; and that from, and after this day, any gentleman of the whip may be permitted to treat with the Marquess of Newbury."

The motion being seconded, a gentleman, whose flaxen wig and gay surtout denoted his profession, rose to move an amendment. He was reluctant to offer himself to the Association; but this was a subject on which he felt strongly, and he must say he thought it was not one to be passed over lightly. The proposition of his honourable friend, to rescind the order of interdiction immediately on the submission of the noble Marquess, might come with a good grace from him, who might be considered the party principally aggrieved. But they must not forget that there was another party at least equally interested, and that party was the Association. (Hear, hear!) He must say, he thought it a practice fraught with dan-

ger, not only to the profession of which he was an humble member, but to the existence of the Association itself, to treat with leniency such offences as this. He thought such weakness was calculated to impress offenders with a notion of impunity; (hear, hear!) to argue a sense of weakness in that Association; and, therefore, in a manner to encourage infractions of their fundamental laws, and vital privileges. (Hear, hear!) On these grounds, he begged leave to move, as an amendment, that the words "this day," be struck out, and that

foreigners was on the increase? He had been credibly informed that in many establishments of the first order, not a single British subject was to be found. (Hear, hear, hear!) It was his intention, on an early day, to call the attention of the Society to this alarming subject. Meanwhile he thought nothing could be more impolitic, nothing could be more unwise; he would add, nothing, in his opinion, could have more the effect of treachery, (loud cries of hear!) than to provoke a breach between the aristocracy and that Association. He should cordially support the original motion.

The honourable mover of the amendment rose, amidst cries of question. He must trespass for a few minutes on their indulgence. He had been personally alluded to. He had been grossly — (order, order!) Would they hear him out? (Question, question!) Then he would content himself with flinging back the imputation with the utmost scorn. Seeing the sense of the Association was against him, he should not press his amendment.

Mr. William Mason explained.

The amendment was then negatived, and the question put and carried without a division.

Mr. Copper, being called upon by the Chair, then rose.

Mr. Copper begged leave to put a question to an honourable member opposite, whom he saw in his place. He alluded to his honourable friend (if he might be permitted so to call him) in blue and buff. (Hear, hear! from *Mr. Gaffy*, the honourable member in blue and buff) A rumour had reached his

ly these. The honourable baronet had lately thought proper, or had been compelled by circumstances, to reduce his household. Instead of two gentlemen in plain clothes, and three in uniform, they were now, he understood, only one of the former and two of the latter. He wished to ask his honourable friend whether, in consequence of this arrangement, he had consented to perform services which were not within the range of his duty, and beneath his station? He would ask his honourable friend whether he, being under butler, had not lately, more than once, stood behind the honourable baronet's carriage? (Hear! from the extreme right.) He understood that cheer; but he would not be deterred from what he considered his duty, by the opposition of a party whose levelling principles went to the ruin of the profession; the subversion of that Association, and of society itself. (Laughter and cheers.) He had heard other particulars which, if true, rendered his honourable friend in blue and buff, chargeable, in his (Mr. Copper's) opinion, with having infringed the rules of that

Association, and degraded the dignity of the cloth. But as his purpose was ~~speedy~~ to afford his honourable friend an opportunity of explanation, he should confine ~~himself~~ ~~on~~ the present occasion to the ~~single~~ ~~circumstances~~ which he had named.

Mr. Gaffy said, he should not detain the Association many minutes. He had nothing to complain of, as regarded the manner in which his honourable friend in green and gold lace had brought this matter forward. He only questioned his perfect discretion in so doing.

worse Derby, and a ruinous Leger, was placed under temporary embarrassment,--was it for him, he said, to cavil about petty points? And after having, as he admitted, done a few things not within the exact line of his duty, was it for him, under existing circumstances, to come down to that Association and ask for a vote of indemnity? (Hear, hear! from the left, echoed back from the right.) He would go farther, and say that he was prepared to clean knives and black shoe-leather, rather than dissolve a connection from which he had derived so much pleasure and profit. (Cheers from the right.) He begged to assure his honourable friend in green and gold lace, that he was prepared to meet this inquiry in whatever shape it might be brought forward.

Mr. Copper said, he should certainly not suffer the business to rest there. "Good Heavens!" exclaimed the honourable gentleman, "is it come to this, that an honourable member of the long standing, and high station, of my honourable friend in blue and buff, can venture to get up in this room and avow his

readiness to clean knives and black boots ! Nothing can more clearly prove the length to which party spirit is capable of going than the cheers with which that extraordinary declaration of the honourable member in blue and buff was greeted, by honourable gentlemen opposite. I should like to know what any of these gentlemen would say if they were directed by their employers to perform such offices. I should like to be present when my honourable friend in blue and buff, himself, received an order of that description — (Loud

CHAPTER XXVI.

DURING this latter discussion, the room had filled rapidly, and I was informed that a very interesting debate was to come on that night, upon a question not so important in itself, as from being selected for a trial of strength between the rival parties in the Association. The demon of discord could not, it seemed, be excluded even from this assembly, in which, if in any, a unity of interest and opinion might be supposed to prevail. My neighbour assured me, and my own remarks soon confirmed his information, that there were no less than three different parties recognised in that room. There were those who wanted the strict system, which had been acted upon for many years past, to be relaxed; and some who wished it to be entirely superseded. The adherents of the

old system, the Conservative, — if I may be allowed to borrow phrases from the great analogy of politics, — were arrayed a formidable band on the right side of the room; the Whigs, a respectable body, were ranged opposite to them, and the Radicals, a small knot, were collected at their left. I took my place on a cross bench, where I was informed the Neutrals sat, resolved to judge for myself before I gave my adherence to either faction.

The interest of the evening then was centered in

"I rise sir," said he, "under feelings of great diffidence and anxiety—of diffidence, on account of the responsibility which I incur by undertaking the agitation of this important question; and of anxiety for the result of this night's debate by which the future policy of this Association must be governed. I must say, however, I look with confidence to your decision; I cannot for a moment suppose that you will stultify yourselves by a negatory vote in favour of an obsolete system—a system which might originally have had some recommendations—which might have done for times past; but is utterly unsuited to the altered habits, the intelligence and liberality of the present day." (Hear, hear!) The age of coaches and six and regiments of retainers had passed away, and has been succeeded by a less ostentatious way of living. But, on the other hand, wealth was more generally diffused; and if the splendour of the cloth was somewhat obscured, the demand for it was greatly increased. This state of things might be lamented by the gentlemen opposite, but it was beyond their control. As

prudent politicians and men of the world, they should adapt themselves to circumstances, and meet the exigencies of the times. They have already done away with some obnoxious institutions, and carried into effect some salutary changes; but much still remained to be done. Senseless alarms had, however, again recently sprung up, to retard the progress of reform. He remembered, when he first belonged to that Association, a proposition to do away with hair-powder was rejected as pregnant with fatal consequences to his order; but he had lived

notorious as the sun at noonday, that the most important offices in many first-rate establishments were filled by strangers to their laws and language? (Hear, hear, hear!) Was not the tyranny and insolence of the cloth spoken of in every square and considerable street as a public nuisance? (cries of No, no!) No, no! he said Yes, yes! These might be unpleasant truths, but it was better to profit by them than to suppress them. What, then, were they to do? were they to return to the coercive system? were they prepared to put to the ban those persons who used such language? If so, he would tell them they must interdict half London. (Loud cries of hear!) By following such counsels, they would, indeed, involve the whole body in speedy and irretrievable ruin. But they must moderate their tone, they must accede to the demand for retrenchment which has been raised in a voice too powerful to be resisted. They must no longer attempt to defend sinecures; they must consent with a good grace to the reform of abuses which will no longer be endured. They must

relinquish some perquisites to maintain the rest. Let them yield with a good grace what they could not retain, and public confidence would be restored ; let them cling to their exploded privileges and he would predict that in less than two years, they will have ceased to assemble in that room. For his own part, unless reform was introduced, he, for one, would rather send his son to sea than put him into a profession which would hold out less hopes of advancement and profit even than the naval service of the country. (Hear, hear !) He would now

ited the introduction of oil or composition into the steward's apartment. (Hear, hear !) The aggregate period during which these gentlemen had filled their situations was twenty-nine years eight months and seventeen days, say in round numbers thirty years ; this was on an average nearly two years and nine months each. He had been informed, on entering that room, that seventeen more had, from the same cause, tendered their resignations, which had been accepted. Did they call that nothing ? (Hear, hear, hear !) In another week, he verily believed, the number would be trebled. He might be told that the Association was strong enough to put down such opposition, as it had formerly repressed similar risings against its authority ; but this was an insurrection of no ordinary nature, — it was a wide-spreading combination, headed by men of the greatest weight and importance in society. He would only name the Duke of Northallerton, the Marquess of Trowbridge, the Marquess of Overton, the Earl of Caversham, Lord George Jervis, Sir John Hardy, and several common-

ers' of the first rank. The language held by these men was of the most determined character. They declared that rather than give way, they would put half-pay officers, and curates out of place, at the head of their establishments. (Hear, hear!) He presumed that the Association was not prepared to wage war with the whole aristocracy. He deprecated such a collision, and looked with feelings of horror and contempt on the rashness and folly of those who would provoke it. And what, after all, was the subject matter of dispute? No-

men who were not disposed to go all the way with him, might, without committing themselves, vote for his motion, which was merely one of a temporary nature. He merely proposed to try an experiment. He should not trespass longer upon their patience, but conclude with moving that the standing order of the Association, No. 54, which prohibited the use of oil, spermaceti, or any other composition in lighting the apartments of any of the principal officers of any domestic establishment in Great Britain, be suspended for three months.

The honourable gentleman sat down, amidst loud and long continued cheering.

Mr. Watson seconded the motion; which being put from the Chair, *Mr. Pointer* rose. He should, he said, meet the motion of the honourable gentleman with a direct negative. He ridiculed the alarm which the honourable gentleman had so eloquently painted. If that Association were true to itself, it would soon put down this senseless clamour which arose from a small number of paltry mean individuals, whose only motive was to save a few

shillings. (Hear, hear, hear!) The honourable gentleman had quoted two or three sounding names. He would take the first mentioned — the Duke of Northallerton; why, the Duke was a notorious screw, a man who would ride a mile round to save a turnpike. He had reason to believe that the feeling expressed by his grace on this subject was not that of the Duchess, — was not that of his eldest son — was not that of the younger branches of his family. He contended that in the great body of the aristocracy, there was no hostility to

sole himself with a pot of ale by the kitchen fire. (Laughter and cheers.) The honourable member, and an honourable member of the cloth, who had spoken earlier in the evening, had alluded to the importation of foreigners; but he could assure them that their apprehensions on that head were greatly exaggerated. The number of foreigners domesticated in this country was but few, and of those who came over, a very small proportion made it their permanent abode. He knew of a whole establishment who resigned last week, because they could not live in a country where there was no opera. He had heard a great deal about expediency, but he hated the word. He would not yield to intimidation, and was prepared to make his stand on this point of wax-figs. (Loud cheering.)

An honourable member in crimson and buff could not sit still and hear the allusions which had been made by the last speaker to a noble Duke, whom he had the honour to serve, without denying them. He begged to assure the honourable gentleman that there was nothing

niggardly or unhandsome in the noble Duke's household, as a proof of which he might be permitted to state that an honourable friend of his who had lately presided over the culinary department in his Grace's establishment, had, in a period rather less than of nine years, during which he held that office, realized upwards of four thousand pounds. (Hear, hear !)

Mr. Diggles supported the motion, though he was free to confess he carried his views much farther than the honourable mover. He hoped he should see the day when the changes,

Association at any great length. He could imagine that persons whose low tastes and habits led them to prefer a pot of ale.—(the honourable gentleman was here interrupted by cries of order, and,—

The Chairman pointed out the impropriety of following up that line of remark, and cautioned the honourable gentleman to abstain from it.

Mr. St. Edwards would bow to the Chair, but he could not hear such sentiments without protesting against them in the strongest manner. He felt that he should not be doing his duty to the profession of which he was an humble member if he did not deprecate the language used by the honourable member. What! supposing there were abuses, which, however, he by no means admitted; but supposing there were abuses in the profession, was it becoming in them to foul their own nests? Was it wise, was it decent, was it decorous in them to cry stinking fish? (Hear, hear, hear!) The honourable member sought to degrade and vilify his order.—

Mr. Diggles with great emphasis, "That is a lie."

Unless the reader should chance to be a member of a certain assembly, I despair of giving him any adequate idea of the scene which followed upon this pithy remark. Several gentlemen started to their legs amidst clamorous cries of "order!" Mr. St. Edwards, who rose with great dignity to leave the room, was seized by his coat-tails and compelled to resume his seat. About half an hour was spent in vain attempts to induce Mr.

But so much time had been spent in this interlude that the debate on the main question could not be resumed that evening: the Chairman reminding the Association that the hour approached, when they would be required to repair, for the most part, to their professional duties. It was proposed, therefore, to adjourn the debate, but the calls for the question predominated; and, after a great deal of noise, a division took place, when there appeared

For the motion (including proxies) 286

Against it (ditto) 412

The question, therefore, passed in the negative amidst loud cheering from the Conservative party. The Association then adjourned.

CHAPTER XXVII.

BEFORE the expiration of the week I was summoned before the Board, and was informed by the Chairman that a situation had been found for me. "Viscount Boreton, the eldest son of the Earl of Heavitree, who has lately

queer-tempered. Some of our gentlemen will tell you that he is the rummest member of the peerage; but that perhaps is going rather far. However, sir, when we next have the pleasure of seeing you, I hope you will be able to report an improvement in the breed. Lord Heavitree has not brought his family to town for some three or four years past, and we have reason to suspect that his establishment is at present composed of persons unknown to this Association. As you will probably accompany your young man down to his father's house during the vacation, you will of course immediately make it your business to ascertain whether what I have mentioned is the case or not; and, if you find our suspicions to be well-founded, you will communicate to me under his lordship's frank, addressed here, and you will likewise endeavour, to the best of your judgment and ability, to excite discontent in the household, supposing that this Board should not supply you with any particular instructions how to act."

Having spoken to this effect, the wor-

thy gentleman pressed my hand with great cordiality, wishing me good morning and good luck.

I found Lord Boreton a young man about twenty, of the most ordinary appearance. His manner, however, was very consequential; and he thought it necessary to examine me very minutely as to my qualifications, respecting which I succeeded at length in satisfying him, and was hired on the spot.

We proceeded at once to Cambridge, my young lord being a fellow commoner of Trinity

tervened between this important business, and the meal which concluded the labours of the day.

Lord Boreton's means were such as enabled him to outvie most of his fellow-students ; but he had a formidable rival in the son of a stock-jobber, named Jaggs, whose allowance was two thousand pounds per annum. This gentleman's wines were confessedly superior to Boreton's, though opinion was divided as to the merits of their respective artists. For these reasons, my Lord hated Jaggs, and Jaggs hated my Lord, while the rest of the party ate their dinners, and drank their wines, and abused them to each other behind their backs.

My colleague of the white cap, was a Parisian, named Dubos, and a very extraordinary fellow. He had been a young adventurer at the breaking out of the French Revolution, and distinguished himself among the foremost of the patriotic citizens who insulted the unfortunate Queen, on the ignominious return of the royal party from Versailles to Paris. This brought him into notice ; he was patronised by the

Mountain, and ultimately obtained a seat in the Committee of Public Safety. There he advocated the most sanguinary measures; not, as he assured me, with great simplicity, from any conviction of their political expediency, nor from any abstract love of blood, but merely in self-defence, lest the fatal suspicion of incivism should attach to him. After the reign of terror, finding that his public services were not in requisition, he set up in business as a *traiteur*, and had acquired one of the best connections in Paris, when alarmed by the rumour-

when Monsieur Dubos informed me one day with a sentimental elevation of his shoulders and eyebrows, that we were about to part.

“I will tell you, *mon cher ami*,” said he, “I am vary sorry—*Je suis bien fâché*, but a new *arrangement* shall soon separate us. *Voilà !*” he proceeded, laying the tip of his forefinger against his nose, “Milor Shagg, he send for me, he say, ‘Dubos, what salary Milor Boreton give you?’ ‘Ha, Monsieur,’ say I, ‘two honder pound a year.’ ‘*Bon*, I will give you two honder and fifty.’ *Voilà tout ! c’est un affair fini*. I tell Milor Boreton the noble behaviour of Milor Shagg—ha !—he fall down in one grand passion. ‘Monsieur Shagg,’ say he, ‘is one dom—*comment appelez vous ?*—black—blackguard, and you are anoder.’ *Sacre !* Milor Boreton had not very little complaisance, I shall tell you. He ver droll man ; he expect me to give up fifty pound a year for his sake—ha ! *sans doute* he is one *veritable tête monté*.”

And Monsieur Dubos enjoyed a hearty laugh at the absurdity and *bêtism* of his noble employer’s conduct, which, of course, I could not

concur with him in thinking was any proof of insanity or romantic wildness; but it would have been useless to attempt explaining to him that the conduct of Mr. Jaggs was inconsistent with the usages of genteel society.

Lord Boreton was mortified and enraged to the last degree at the seduction of his cook; his feelings were wounded in the tenderest point, and he immediately demanded satisfaction of Mr. Jaggs for the outrage. They met, and, after two shots had been exchanged without mischief, the seconds endeavoured to ac-

CHAPTER XXVIII.

As soon as my lord was well enough to be moved, we proceeded by easy journeys to Boreton Park, the family seat, in Somersetshire. We arrived on the fifth day at our destination, a fine ancient place, which bespoke a large fortune, and superior establishment. I bore in mind the instructions of the Chairman of our Society, and entered the house, resolved, if an opportunity offered, to signalize my zeal and fidelity to its interests. I very soon satisfied myself that there was an open field for the employment of my talents; and that I should be without a rival in this household, which consisted of a set of innocents who were not aware even of the existence of the Association. The house-steward, Mr. Timberlake, was a slow old twaddler, who, before he came here, had

been butler to an archdeacon ! The Earl's gentleman was a tiger, who, in the absence of anything better, was the glass of fashion in this primitive locality. Mrs. Goodyear, the housekeeper, was a stupid old soul, who had been thirty years in her situation, and piqued herself on attachment to the family. Mrs. Moger the Countess's lady-in-waiting, was a maiden of forty, a desperate quiz, who had never seen high life, and patronized notions of morality and propriety suitable to her years, and personal deficiencies. The only tolerable

introducing claret. In fact, the whole thing was so bad that I doubted whether I could do any good by staying; and in my letter to the Chairman containing a full and particular description of the establishment, I left it to him to decide whether I ought to remain and sanction a state of things which seemed beyond the reach of reform. The answer of my superior recommended me by all means to remain, and not to despair of enlightening the minds of these barbarous people: He instructed me to consider myself a missionary of the Association; and for a time, at least, to sacrifice my own private convenience to the interests of the general body. He thought Miss Loveday, (who attended upon the young ladies,) would be easily brought round, and that something might be made of the old lord's gentleman. As to the elders, he agreed with me in thinking them quite impracticable. The only thing to be done, was to undermine their authority by holding them up to ridicule and contempt. He desired, also, I would bear in mind that rude as the inferior members of the establish-

ment might be, the *esprit du corps* still inhabited their rugged bosoms; and, if properly awakened, would render them discontented if not mutinous. In conclusion, he urged me to use every exertion, as the Earl of Heavitree was a mortal enemy to the Association, and the present opportunity of harassing him through the sides of his son and heir might not occur again.

Our worthy president, might no doubt, have communicated with many an agent of greater ability, but certainly with none more zealous

the saying, "like master, like man;" for my noble youth showed his superior *savoir vivre* above, as I did below stairs. He held his family very cheap, and treated their manners and notions with ridicule and contempt. It was amusing enough, while waiting at dinner, to hear him passing his comments on the dishes, to the horror of Mr. Timberlake, who was often obliged to put on his most terrific frown to repress the grins, titters, and winks of the footmen. When he had done with abusing the cookery, my young Lord—for he generally monopolized the conversation—would take to criticising his sisters, finding fault with their dress and manners, contradicting their assertions, differing from their opinions, ridiculing their observations, and taking great pains to convince them that they were fools and dowdies; but the young ladies, who were, in fact, plain good-humoured girls, and nothing more, only laughed, and let him have his own way; while the Countess, his mother, hung upon every word which fell from him, as if it was a precious *morceau* of wit and high-

breeding. As to the old Earl, what between natural stupidity and acquired deafness, he did not hear half that was said, nor understand half that he heard. Be that as it may, his son's daily satire on his table and establishment, produced no change or amendment in either.

Lord Boreton would sometimes condescend to impart his disgusts and annoyances on this subject to my sympathising bosom. I respectfully admitted the justice of his complaints, and declared it was a thousand pities that the Earl would not be guided in these matters

worthier hands, in which event I might look to high preferment.

Fortified by the young lord's support, I thought I was strong enough to set the faction of Timberlake and Co. at open defiance. These people, from my first coming, had, if I may use the expression without incurring a suspicion of vanity, been conscious of a superior spirit, and regarded me with all the jealousy and spite which such unwelcome intrusion was calculated to excite in mean minds. They were constantly talking and levelling sarcasms at me, and claiming contempts and insults which I never meant. Old Timberlake and Mrs. Goodyear, tried the majestic with me ; but this failing, became exceedingly venomous and splenetic. Mrs. Moger fell back upon her gentle blood, of which she boasted a considerable quantity, talked of low upstarts, and every day moralized on the changes and chances of life, wondering who would have thought that she should be reduced to earn her living in service, when her grandfather kept a carriage

and livery servants of his own! Poor Mr. Taphouse, finding himself likely to be superseded in the office of beau, by the fine London gentleman, swaggered and blustered, and boldly declared he did not care a d—n for any man.

The only person in the room who seemed well-inclined to me from the first, was pretty little Miss Loveday. To her, therefore, I addressed an easy condescending gallantry; to the rest I opposed a supercilious politeness, and unruffled temper. Miss Loveday had taken

affections of Miss Loveday, we came to an understanding with each other.

This defection from the opposite party gave me an equality of numbers in the upper room, and the affability of my manners had won me a decided majority in the hall. Thus I was in a condition to commence active operations with a prospect of success. My scheme was a grand one, and may perhaps be thought to denote a bold and comprehensive genius. It was no less than to procure, by previous arrangement, the simultaneous resignation of, at least, three fourths of the Boreton household. Taphouse and my fair friend were already engaged to do so when I gave the signal, and intended to try their fortunes in town. To gain over the inferior people was more difficult. I had not the same opportunity of conversing with them, nor could equal dependence be placed upon their co-operation. I studied their characters; and made my first attempt on one of the footmen, a good-looking young man, upwards of six feet high, and of a smarter carriage than his brothers of the cloth.

"You have a good place here my friend?" said I.

"Pretty middlingish, sir, thank ye," answered he.

"Now about what wages may you get?"

"Twenty pounds a-year, sir," said the fellow, after some hesitation.

"Twenty pounds a-year!" echoed I; "pray, what height are you?"

"Don't know I'm sure, sir; handy six foot, mayhap."

"Six feet! hold yourself up; six feet and

Thomas gaped, and stared, and then grinned. "Na, na, you're a-coming Lunnun over me now, Mr. Wiggins ; none of your fun."

"I don't know what you mean," said I, "by coming London over you ; all I have to say is this, that a man with your personal advantages might, with a little training, easily command a situation as *showman*, that is to say, a gentleman of handsome outside, who receives a high salary for setting off the colours of some great family."

"Sure !" cried Thomas, fixing his eyes steadfastly upon me to ascertain whether I was in jest or earnest ; "and, ain't there no work to do ?"

"Not a turn," replied I, "except being in the hall for a couple of hours every day, and standing at the sideboard during dinner ; if you call that work. You may generally have all the mornings and nights to yourself, and a man to clean your clothes and shoes."

"Dang it !" exclaimed Thomas, in an ecstasy, "I'll have a turn at thick ; but, come now, you're a-gammoning me, I know you be."

"Well," said I, with a slight shrug, "you know your own business best," and I moved away.

"Stop a bit, Mr. Wiggins, do ye, sir; no offence: is it all right though, and no mistake?"

"I am no joker, Thomas," said I gravely.

"And could you get us into this here job now?"

"I think I might promise as much."

"Then dang me!" cried Thomas, striking his fist on the table with great energy, "I

Sickness, Thomas, may impair your personal attractions, or you may get your bones broken for insolence ; in short, you should be prepared for any accident which may disqualify you for this office, and reduce you to the necessity of working again for a livelihood. I hope no such accident will occur ; but it is always better to be prepared for the worst. No, the London season does not commence these six weeks, therefore, there is no need for hurry. All you have to do is to go to Mr. Timberlake and politely acquaint him that you require an addition of ten or twelve pounds to your salary. This will be refused—there is no harm done—you give a month's warning, and leave the house like a gentleman."

"But," suggested Thomas with a look of alarm, "suppose they was to give me the ten or twelve quid extra?"

"My honest friend, your simplicity amuses me. Don't you know whenever a man asks for an advance of salary, it is considered a delicate way of tendering his resignation? So it will be taken in your case, depend upon it."

“Well, I believe there an’t much fear,” said Thomas. “I’m sure, Mr. Wiggins, I’m ever obliged to you, and you may depend I shall pay the greatest attention to the good advice you give me. I sha’n’t know myself after all the *caddling* I’ve got here ; for as I come last, the main of the work falls upon me. Nothing to do but wait at table and stand about the hall, laying a-bed all the morning, and skylarking at night ! My eyes, I shall be in heaven !”

“To be sure you will ; you were never

honte, that is to say, everything in the shape of modesty, or you will never do for a London gentleman. Hold your chest out, and your head up, and never bend it to anybody under a Lord. And pray throw off *Zummerzetscher*; don't speak broad, nor grin from ear to ear; but smile just enough to show that you have good teeth, and let your words glide out genteelly," (here I gave him an illustration). "Another remark I have to make, when you walk across the room, don't step as you do here, heavy enough to shake the house, but learn to glide gracefully along, thus. And when you put down or remove a person's plate, do not exhaust your lungs in his face. These may seem little things in the country, but believe me they are of the last importance in town. Never put yourself into a fuss or perspiration about anything; be calm, cool, collected, that is the great point."

The grateful Thomas faithfully promised to obey all these directions, and to employ every leisure moment during his remaining sojourn in the country in practising for fashionable life.

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bettering themselves. Even the steward came to me, hoping he might win the liberty, but wanting to know I could recommend him to a situation. In short, the spirit of discontent was so active, and instead of canvassing for me, I had rather to repress their zeal. I was, however, in relating that at my instigation several members of this establishment sent in their resignations on the same day, a storm which struck dismay into the souls of Goodyear and Mr. Timberlake, and engaged my Lord Heavitree himself. I was in the confusion for twenty-four hours, without reason to believe that the worthy steward was for accommodating matters, but his outward voice was for warfare. The

leader of this mutiny as he termed it. He very easily traced it to me, who in fact took little or no trouble to elude his inquiry. Lord Boreton was then required to dismiss me on the moment, which his lordship positively declined to do ; and was consequently ordered to obey or quit the house. When he found that he was obliged to sacrifice me on the altar of filial duty, Lord Boreton who, I believe, I may say without vanity, was envied the possession of such a treasure, resolved to bestow me upon an intimate friend of his, who had just quitted the University. The offer was, of course, readily accepted ; and as the salary was liberal, there was no objection on my part.

and read them and
 their words shall
 be written no side
 of any banner
 and will once, advise
 the people to the

CHAPTER XXIX

My new gentleman, Mr. Penderell, was just
 of age, and entered upon the enjoyment of a fine
 fortune and a large sum of money, the accu-
 mulation of a long minority. By way of in-
 suring him to economy, and teaching him the

but could hardly be said to indicate the brilliant career which he afterwards ran ; for his debts on coming of age did not exceed fifteen thousand pounds. But when I entered his service, some five months after he had thrown off the trammels of legal infancy, I beheld a system and scale of expense which I will confess at first astonished me, although no longer a novice in the fashionable world. In my own particular department, I found Mr. Penderell's wardrobe to consist of thirty-eight dress-coats, forty morning ditto, nine fancy dresses of the most expensive character, seven racing jackets of the richest pattern, seventeen robes de chambre, besides innumerable vests, and inexpressibles, piles of linen, and all other conceivable and many inconceivable articles of apparel for use and ornament. Not having been prepared to see the thing done in this style, I considered well before I committed myself, what game I should play. I soon discovered that it would be in vain to try for the premiership, which was already occupied by Mr. Gammoner, the master of the horse, who possessed claims and

merits compared with which mine, and indeed those of any other person, would have been but as dust in the scale. Laying aside, therefore, the ambition of power, I applied my mind exclusively to the more solid views of profit : and I very soon saw, that, with common sense, and common prudence, and, I may add, with common honesty, a very good thing might be made of this situation. It was quite clear that with such an extensive wardrobe, the respective articles must go out of fashion before they could be worn

forthwith to reduce the stock to one-third of its present amount, and never allow it to accumulate beyond that average. And here I found the advantage of being a member of the Association; for had I not been fortified by the precepts and practice of that important body, it is just possible, notwithstanding my happy exemption from anything like *mauvaise honte* that I might have hesitated, just at entering on a new situation, coolly to appropriate upwards of a hundred pounds' worth of wearing apparel, as the perquisites of office. But if there was a standing order of the Association, the observance of which was more strictly enjoined, or the neglect more severely visited than another, it was this, that, "The reversion of a gentleman's wearing apparel being the undoubted property of his valet, or the person acting in that capacity, every such valet or other person is required and expected rigidly to enforce his just rights, claims, and privileges in that behalf. And every such valet, &c. is strictly prohibited compromising such rights, or receiving any cast article of apparel as the *gift*

of his employer, or by word or deed countenancing the erroneous opinion that he appropriates such article on other grounds than that of immemorial custom or prescription. And any such employer or gentleman, as aforesaid, who shall presume to question or resist such claim of his valet or other person, shall be subjected to the severe displeasure of this Association." A wise and necessary order, which it is but justice to say, was enforced with moderation and impartiality; for, on one occasion, a member dismissed from his situation in consequence of

his approval, a list of the articles which I proposed to remove. He examined the paper, and pointed out two or three items which he wished to except for the present. I bowed in acquiescence, and thus this matter was arranged without difficulty. An awkward ignorant fellow, in the same situation, might have defeated his own object, or gained it by the compromise of a great principle : I mean that he might, by his bungling shuffling way of going to work, have put it into this young man's head to suppose that the disposal of these left-off garments was a patronage which he might exercise as he pleased ; whereas, by proceeding on a totally opposite assumption, the thing was at once put on a proper footing, and never disputed.

CHAPTER XXX.

MR. PENDERELL was determined to lose no time in availing himself of the goods the gods had provided for him. Pleasure was his business, at which he worked with an assiduity worthy a better cause,—if, indeed, a better there

Melton Mowbray was our head-quarters during the winter months. At the latter place, having a great deal of time upon my hands, I applied myself to the improvement of my mind, resuming the system of study which I had pursued when in attendance upon Mr. Wainwright.

On the whole, I had good reason to be satisfied with the fortune which had put me into such a situation. I had the easiest best-natured gentleman in the world, whom nothing could put out of humour; and my emoluments were such that, if things went on in their present course for a few years, I should realise a small independence. But, alas! uninterrupted prosperity is not the lot of man! In my third year of office this promising career was interrupted by one of those untoward accidents to which young men of fortune are too subject: a shaft from Cupid's bow penetrated a bosom which had never been defended from such an assault by that only effectual shield, the breastplate of self-love. One of the beautiful and high-born Lady Georgianas of the fashionable world brought him to her feet. The first I heard

of this fatal intelligence—fatal to my prospects, as the sport of the whale is death to the small fry — was from one of the friends who occasionally dropped in at Mr. Penderell's levee. I was in the act of preparing a razor for his use, when this gentleman jocularly charged Mr. P. with a deliberate intention to commit matrimony. I was so much affected by the bare notion of such a thing thus suddenly broached, that I cut a great slice out of the 'strop in my confusion; but my hand almost dropped powerless when I found that Penderell did not

get it well gilt ; but how a fellow like you, with your twenty thousand a-year, or whatever it is, and everything you can wish or desire, your horses, yachts, *et bonnes fortunes*, can make it out an economical measure to marry a penniless girl is, I confess, to me a puzzler."

"Nothing can be more easily explained," answered Mr. Penderell, as he proceeded to shave. "I find my twenty thousand a-year will not keep up these horses, yachts, *et bonnes fortunes*. How I can, — confound this razor ! you might as well give me a saw. What the devil are you thinking about, Wiggins ! — don't you see I've almost cut my throat ?"

I blundered out an apology and supplied him with another instrument.

"Ay, this will do. You see, Arthur, though I can't retrench any of these expenses, I can give them up altogether, and with no great sacrifice either ; for, hang me but I often find this sort of thing as much a bore as anything else. As to Melton, I don't care if I never see the place again ; I'm tired of riding in a crowd, and mean to take a country if I

can get one ; in fact, the one I live in is hunted by subscription, and, I'm told, they'd be very glad to give it up to me. The best plough country in England, and I'm told they have capital things."

"Oh yes ! I know what your infernal provincial countries are, chopping about turnip fields and casting over sheep walks half the day, and mobbing him in a big wood the other half by way of finish. I'll trouble you for your capital things. And you who used to swear you never wished to see a run of more than fifteen minutes. Take my word for it, you'll

you it's a settled thing; therefore, there's no use in saying any more about it. Come, I don't despair of convincing you, after all, that the speculation is no such bad one. At all events, you must come down and see how it works. Stewkley has the best shooting in Wiltshire. I book you for the season, mind; and, whenever you like to see how splendidly my hounds can work a cold scent, I'll stand a mount. In fact, you must make Stewkley your head-quarters. I shall have a pretty good cook, and I don't think you'll find fault with the wine."

"My dear Charles, I shall be delighted. You know there's nobody I've a greater regard for than I have for yourself; and heartily rejoiced shall I be, to see this marriage of yours turn out well. I believe you've every prospect; for Lady Georgiana is a charming person, so amiable, and everything. And, as you say, there certainly is a great pleasure in watching hounds one is interested in; and, very likely, if I had the same chance, I should get as tired as you are, of riding in a ruck.

of three or four hundred horses. After all, there's no hunting in Leicestershire; now; it's merely racing. How are you off for cover-shooting at Stewkley?"

"Capital; about sixteen, or seventeen hundred acres, most of it undeniable, and pretty well stocked."

I heard no more of the conversation, as the gentlemen now went into the adjoining room to breakfast. But I had heard enough to satisfy me there was no mistake about the matter. I learned, moreover, upon inquiry, that the horses were already covered in the

found every day, and I paused. I asked my colleague, Mr Gammoner, what he thought of the change that was about to take place ; but that functionary declared that he had hardly given it a thought, as he did not fear that it would make any difference to him.

“I shouldn’t wonder though,” added he by way of consolation, “if it was to turn out not so good a job for you. When a gent. marries, you see, he haven’t got the same call to dress so sporting, cause, there a’n’t so much a object to please the women, like. But that makes no odds to the hosses.”

There was certainly too much truth in the remark ; but hope, ever springing in the human breast, and the advice of an influential member of our fraternity, forbade me to throw up a good situation from apprehensions of the future, which might never be realized. Mr. Penderell and his lady, were as likely as not, to live like a fashionable couple ; in which case, my situation would not be materially, if at all, depreciated. I was told that I betrayed ignorance of the world, in my excessive alarm lest

the beautiful and high-bred bride of a young man of large fortune should meddle with the affairs of waistcoats and shirts. Her ladyship's time would, probably, be fully occupied with her own wardrobe.

CHAPTER XXXI.

IN due time the marriage was celebrated, and, with an involuntary sigh, I ascended the rumble of the travelling carriage, which was to convey the happy pair to a "rural blessed retreat," lent to them, for the honeymoon, by an uncle of the bride. My companion in the rumble, my lady's gentlewoman, was neither very young, nor handsome; a circumstance which did not tend to diminish my ill-humour. She, however, immediately evinced a disposition to be on friendly terms with me, and, before we had been acquainted five minutes, began to question me with respect to Mr. Penderell's temper, habits, and the exact amount of his rent roll. I answered as drily and evasively as politeness would permit; but, without noticing, or appearing to notice, my reserve, the

my spleen, "I dare say you thought
pretty good catch."

"Catch, indeed!" echoed Mrs. True-
some indignation, "no such great catch
all; if you've got the money, we've got
and title."

"Beauty!" I repeated, in a con-
tone; "a mere drug in the market,
much the same."

"Upon my word, indeed! I hope
don't intend to imply such observations
daughter of the Earl of Stickfast?"

"I mean no offence, Mrs. Truefit
wish to be personal: but, as you seem
gate a good deal on your title, I beg
ask who is the Earl of Stickfast?"

"Who is the Earl of Stickfast?"

“Pardon me, ma'am ; all I mean, is, we don't consider we gain any honour by your alliance ; the connection could be no object ; for, though we are untitled, you must be quite aware that the advantage of family is on our side. I don't wish to say anything unpleasant to your feelings, but, if I'm not mistaken, the Earl of Stickfast's grandfather was a grocer.”

“Well, — I never —”

“Pray understand me, my dear madam,” said I, with a superior bow and smile ; “do not, for an instant, suppose that we look down upon him on that account ; his father's merit was the greater for rising from such an humble origin. Lady Georgiana is a very beautiful and lady-like, and, I am informed, a very amiable young woman ; but, when you come to talk of rank and family, don't you see the thing is a farce ? we have been squires in Wiltshire for five hundred years.”

Mrs. Truefit waxed very wrath, accusing me of intending to insult her ; and, as I did not think it expedient to make her my enemy, I administered some soothing syrup, which ope-

with a minute memoir of the domestic life of the Stickfast family, and the love intrigues, flirtations, jiltings, disappointments, and matrimonial speculations of Lady Stickfast and herself.

The ill-humour with which I had been subsiding as we rolled along, I listened to with interest; and, as we drew near our journey's end, I graciously intimated to my coadjutor, my wish that a good correspondence should always subsist between us. My friend received this overture with great pleasure, and assured me that whatever influence she possessed—and she gave me to understand this was all-powerful—should be exerted in a manner agreeable to me.

I pass over the honeymoon, which was

spirits to Stewkley. I had been there only once before ; when Mr. Penderell went down in January, with a shooting, or, rather, slaughtering party, for a few days. There was nothing wanting in the place ; but there was one objection to it of some importance, in the shape of an old housekeeper, who had lived in the family some thirty or forty years, and, consequently, had all sorts of absurd impracticable notions. It was, at once, agreed between Mrs. Truefit and myself, that this piece of antiquated furniture must be removed. I thought it would be no easy matter to accomplish ; but Mrs. T. laughed at my fears, and undertook to dislodge the old lady in less than three months, or to eat her. Having a high opinion of the resources of the sex, I thought it not unlikely that she would succeed in her undertaking, notwithstanding the regard which Mr. Penderell entertained for a faithful domestic whom he had known from his infancy.

We found Mrs. Bearcroft as hostilely disposed towards us, as we were towards her. A slight skirmish had taken place between

posed countenance of our young man
having now entered into a league,
and defensive, with the bedchamber-lad
myself on much stronger ground; and
could only engage the steward of the house
to our side, we should form such a tri-
umphant alliance as nothing could withstand. The
mentioned personage was a stranger
only just entered upon office. His
manners were genteel, but reserved, and gave
encouragement to open our views. In
a few days we found that Mr. Lucas was
of his profession, a strict disciplinarian
and observer. At first, Mrs. Truefit and
I hardly knew what to make of this
scrutable man; but we soon decided
on a dangerous character, and that he,
in consequence of his authority, was final

It was my province, of course, to attack this formidable antagonist; and I must confess that I went about it with little of my usual confidence. I felt under the influence of a superior genius. Lucas seemed to read my thoughts, to be aware of my machinations, and to be prepared to frustrate them with the greatest ease. He had already possessed Mr. Penderell with a notion of his stern integrity, and his lofty deportment seemed to keep even her ladyship in awe. His was not a character to be put down by significant looks, mysterious hints, and broken innuendoes. But I could collect nothing substantial against him. His administration was irreproachable, and his private conduct equally so. I could only live in hopes that he might commit himself in some way.

Mrs. Truefit was much more prosperous in her operations. She gave the old lady no peace, but kept up a constant fire of sarcasms, direct insults, and bickerings. The housekeeper retorted all these for some time; but was at last fairly beat, and one day provoked, beyond endurance, launched a reproachful epi-

thet at Mrs. Truefit, and intimated her determination no longer to live under the same roof with her. The skilful Abigail recognizing her opportunity, immediately burst into a passion of tears, and rushing into the presence of her lady, sobbed out her grief and wrongs. She had borne it, she cried, until human nature could abide it no longer; and now, after having persecuted her ever since she had come into the house, Mrs. Bearcroft had at last threatened to deprive her of her place and character. Lady Georgiana, with whom she

ant, was instantly at her feet, and after having poured forth a dozen "loves," "lives," and "souls," coupled with assurances that Mrs. Bearcroft should immediately receive her discharge, my lady came round. Mr. Penderell, however, was rather ashamed of his compliance; for Mrs. Bearcroft was removed with great delicacy and tenderness, and recompensed with a pension of one hundred pounds per annum.

Mrs. Truefit's elation at this triumph could hardly be restrained within due bounds, and she openly declared in the room, with a glance at Mr. Lucas, that she should like to see *anybody* lording it over her in that house. The allusion was palpable, but the major-domo took no notice of it, and the next moment addressed some remark to the waiting gentlewoman with his usual dignified courtesy. This conduct inspired the lady with such a passion of hatred, as utterly deprived her of that caution and temperance which are essential to the prosecution of great designs. She connived at the peculation of the new house-keeper for

the sake of her alliance, and broke with me as a traitor; because I presumed to question her policy, and hesitated at being a party to her violent proceedings. She condescended to intrigue with the inferior members of the household, who, under her instructions and relying upon her protection and patronage, commenced a system of vexations and disrespectful opposition to the steward, who put up with it for some time; but just as a higher flight of insolence and insubordination was about to be tried, Mr. Lucas, without any previous inti-

by the major-domo — against Mrs. Dawkins the housekeeper as principal, and Mrs. Truefit as accessory. Mrs. Dawkins loudly declared her innocence, and courted inquiry with such eagerness, that Mr. Penderell asked the steward by a look, whether he would press the charge; but that dignitary's countenance remaining unmoved, Mrs. Dawkins was directed to produce and explain her accounts. She did so with great apparent alacrity, and was entering into some very minute, and apparently interminable details, to the dismay of the judge, when the prosecutor stopped her by observing that these were irrelevant and only perplexed the question. He requested that she would confine herself to a general statement of the stores dispensed by her to the several departments of the household respectively, during the last month. Mrs. Dawkins bit her lip, and made several efforts to misunderstand the steward's directions, but he still repeated them so clearly, that Mr. Penderell became impatient, and desired her to answer the question without farther evasion. She then protested against

this mode of examination, and professed her incompetency to speak to a point upon which she had made no calculation ; but Mr. Lucas informed her that strict accuracy was not requisite ; it would be sufficient to speak in round numbers from the experience of half a year's administration to the average monthly consumption of housekeeper's stores in parlour, kitchen, &c. After a pause of some duration, Mrs. Dawkins made a rough guess, Mr. Lucas taking pencil-notes of each item. Mr. Penderell remarked that the estimates seemed very

breakfast for eleven persons, (the average number of guests for the last month.) He could not possibly say. Would a quarter of a pound be sufficient? Perhaps it might—perhaps it might not. Would half a pound be too much? He did not think it would. Was it possible to use one pound seven ounces and three quarter on such an occasion? He did not know,—it wasn't his business.

“ I think we must reserve that point,” said the judge, “ and empanel a jury of washer-women upon it.”

“ We have reluctant witnesses to deal with, sir,” answered the prosecutor. “ Rosamond Armstrong, step this way. Rosamond Armstrong, you are under kitchen-maid, are you not ?”

“ La ! Mr. Lucas,” replied the damsel, “ as if you didn't know that as well as me !”

“ No levity here, young woman,” reproved the stern deep voice of Lucas. “ Look at Mr. Penderell there, and answer truly such questions as he shall be pleased to put to you.”

“ Compose yourself, fair Rosamond,” said

Mr. Penderell, good-humouredly, to the damsel, who, conscious of personal charms, was in a state of great agitation from having been summoned to the presence of her young master before she had time to clean herself, or do more than hastily pull out her curl-papers, and exchange her working mob for a lace cap with yellow streamers. "Compose yourself, and tell me whether you are in the habit of using a quarter of a hundred weight of moist sugar to sweeten a plum-pudding? Take your time and," he added, detecting a hurried and fearful

fit ; “ she couldn’t exactly say — hadn’t kept an account—but the fruit was very sour.”

“ Do you mean to say,” inquired the steward, speaking very slowly and solemnly, “ that you ever used twenty-eight pounds of moist sugar to a fruit-pudding? Would you have us believe that any cook or kitchen-maid ever used one tenth of that quantity for such a purpose? You had better mind what you are about, young woman.”

“ I am sure,” sobbed Rosamond, bursting into a passion of tears, “ I don’t know nothing at all about it.”

“ I submit, that is sufficient, sir,” said the steward, and Mr. Penderell assenting, the witness was ordered to withdraw. More proof was adduced of the extravagance of Mrs. Dawkins’s administration, and at length, the cook, who seemed to be implicated in these irregular proceedings, finding the day going against his principal, turned king’s evidence, and clearly established the case of fraud against her and Mrs. Truefit. The example of the cook induced others to come forward and depose to

himself took the lead in the examination of these last witnesses, and seemed to forestall the conviction of the accused, consistent, perhaps, with impartial justice. His passing sentence of dismissal on the accused he gave the housekeeper twenty-four hours of preparation, but forbade the waiting woman to sleep another night under the same roof. This sentence was strictly carried into effect, nor could I ascertain that he had made any effort in behalf of her who, however, to the last maintained an unbending spirit, and went out of the house hurling defiance and hatred at the household steward. Mrs. Dawkins received her with equal nonchalance, and threw out no word of making people suffer who took

Mr. Lucas's authority was now more firmly established than ever. The old housekeeper returned to office, and the new abigail was a Parisian of great talent, who soon consoled Lady Georgiana for the loss of Mrs. Truefit. As to myself, I found that all views of ambition or of gain at Stewkley were at an end. Mrs. Bearcroft regarded me with dislike and suspicion on account of my former alliance with the favourite. Mr. Lucas preserved a haughty distance towards me, and my influence with the squire himself was little or nothing. Those (to me) golden days of dress and dandyism were at an end, as I had too truly anticipated. Mr. P. began to take an interest in the growth of turnips, cultivated his country neighbours, and talked of standing for the county. In short, I made up my mind that it was a mere waste of time to remain any longer where I was, and accordingly tendered my resignation, which was graciously accepted.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE services which I had rendered the Society by carrying their principles into hold from which they had been so excluded, were duly appreciated. My recommendation speedily procured good for Miss Loveday and Mr. Taphouse. The personal accomplishments of my *protégé*, were likewise duly considered, and I had been long in town before I myself obtained a particularly eligible situation, as a gentleman to a noble peer, in the fashionable world, a place for which he was permitted to observe, no ordinary qualifications were fitted. In accepting this

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having infringed the spirit of that excellent resolve ; for though Lord Leighton and his lady lived within the same walls, their establishments were entirely distinct, and they never interfered with each other's arrangements. They might indeed have been termed a couple perfectly suited to each other. They were equal in rank, in age, in personal and mental accomplishments,—they had the same tastes and pursuits, and therefore they enjoyed a great deal of happiness in the married state. My lord loved dissipation, so did my lady ; my lord was given to play, ditto my lady ! His lordship practised gallantries ; her ladyship was not supposed to be a dragon of virtue. Nothing could be more felicitous.

Into this well-ordered *ménage* was I admitted, in the above-named important capacity. All my powers of gentility were here called into action, for the society below stairs was studiously modelled after that of the drawing-room. As our lord and lady mingled only in the best company, so were we very exclusive in our associates ; that is to say, we visited

none but the domestics of those who were quite *comme il faut*, repudiating all such as were in any wise quizzical or vulgar. We called each other by the names and titles of our respective superiors, and observed the conventional ceremonies with much solemnity. I, as being the representative of a very eminent and brilliant member of the *haut ton*, was deeply impressed with my responsibility. I employed a fashionable tailor, as none of my lord's clothes happened to fit me, and if they had, were hardly gay enough for my taste. I was obliged

to my official duties, they were all but a sine-cure. All the coarse work was done by my devil or boy, who at the same time dusted the clothes and blacked the boots of my lord and his humble servant. I had only to lay out his lordship's wearing-apparel, and perform some trifling offices about his person; and when my lord was dressed for dinner, I had the remainder of the day entirely at my own disposal.

Being thus disengaged, the dire disease which, it is said, every man must undergo once in his life, now affected me — I began to perceive the soft impressions of the tender passion. The cause of my distemper was my lady's gentlewoman, a maid of no ordinary attractions. Had I the pencil of a —— but hold, I will try my own humble powers, although I admit that the subject is far above them. But, as simplicity can hardly fail to be intelligible, and can never be ridiculous, I will describe her in plain terms, such as she was, without any attempt at the touches or flourishes of the artist. Miss Julia Peck, then, was rather under than over the middle size, but

Venus of Hottentots in a certain feature. Her flowing ringlets, which *à la* corkscrew, were of jet black, pleasing contrast with a complexion the white and red were happily ming eyes were of a deep and languishing when turned upon you, spoke volu nose was of the Grecian order, and delicate mouth seemed more adapte evaporation of sighs than for any gro She was, indeed, a very small eater ; were regular and white, and her brea sweet as a zephyr from a bed of ros is a plain unadorned description of a person, with which the reader must be for I despair of conveying to him an id graces with which that person was ad

do not end here. Miss Peck was not a mere piece of painted clay ; she had a soul ! It was her misfortune, indeed, (for so she always considered it, to possess exquisite sensibility, in-somuch that the distresses of a Minerva Press heroine could draw as many tears from her eyes as the sorrows depicted by a Scott can wring from those of less susceptible mortals. Poor thing ! she certainly had too much feeling.

Many were the delightful hours we passed together, I reading aloud, with due accompaniments of emphasis and gesture, a poem or tragedy, or the last new romance, while the fair fingers of Miss Peck were employed manufacturing a furbelow, or getting up her lady's small linen. Those happy days are now past and gone, never to return ! Forgive, gentle reader, a momentary sigh bestowed upon these too precious recollections !

We soon learned, by the instinct with which the blind deity inspires his votaries, the state of each other's heart. There was first the eloquence of eyes and sighs. I soon became

aware of my own situation, but I did not feel quite assured with respect to my Julia's sentiments, until one day, when listening to some critical remarks which I was making upon Byron, her attention was so wrapt in what I was saying that she made a dire mistake in a delicate piece of handiwork upon which she was employed — no less than a superb ball costume, in which Lady Leighton proposed to shine conspicuous on the same evening ! Wonderful is the power of that mighty passion which can make a Hercules exchange his club for a distaff.

I endeavoured to console her by hoping that the damage was not irreparable ; but she wrung her hands, and, crying out that the piece was utterly spoilt, and her lady would never forgive her, burst into tears. Touched by her grief, and peculiarly softened by its cause — a too ardent and engrossing attention to myself, — all the tenderness and generosity of my nature was called forth. Obeying its impetuous impulse, I dropped on my knee before the amiable and lovely creature, and taking her passive hand, leant forward until my breath wantoned among her spiral curls, redolent of Macassar.

“ Dearest Miss Peck,” said I, in gentle accents, “ pray do not suffer yourself to be agitated. For Heaven’s sake—for *my* sake,” (this last in a very insinuating tone,) — “ be calm. What is the amount of the damage done ?”

“ Oh ! unspeakable !” sobbed the unhappy Julia, “ as much as five guineas’ worth.”

I rose with the conscious dignity of a hero of romance. My part was taken. I adopted the magnanimous resolve of supplying the place

of the injured article with a new one out of my own pocket. I communicated my intention to her in a few unadorned phrases; and enjoyed the exquisite gratification of seeing the sudden brightening of her radiant countenance, at this unexpected offer, and the mingled gaze of gratitude and admiration which she bestowed upon myself. She was formed to appreciate such a proof of the delicacy of my passion.

“Oh, too generous man!” she cried, “you are the saving of me! How shall the poor Julia ever repay such noble conduct?”

a smile, restrained my impetuosity, and handed me a sample of the article, accompanied with very special directions as to the shop where I was to procure it, the quality and quantity which would be required, and dismissed me with an emphatic injunction that the satin was to be *ell wide*. I hastened to the mercer's as fast as a jarvey could convey me, executed my commission faithfully, and in little more than half an hour, returned in triumph with a whitybrown paper parcel under my arm, which I laid at the feet of the delighted Julia.

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FITZWIGGINS.

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SYDENHAM," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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1840.



FITZ - WIGGINS.

CHAPTER I.

AFTER this incident, a tender correspondence was, of course, carried on between me and this interesting maid. But while I indulged in innocent gallantry, and gave myself up to the "delicious intoxication of a first love," I did not suffer passion to overcome prudence, but always abstained from using any expressions which might, under any unforeseen circumstances, form the groundwork for an action of breach of promise. To own the truth, when I came coolly to reflect upon the feat of gallantry, related in the last chapter, I felt some doubts, whether, like most other chivalrous actions, mine was not as much liable to ridicule as to admiration ; and if my charmer

had signified any desire to reimburse me for the outlay, which I had made upon her account, I will not swear that I should have offered a very determined resistance to it. But, in truth, I was never exposed to the temptation; the amiable Julia, doubtless, from delicacy, forbore any farther allusion to the subject.

I was not so engrossed by love as to neglect the favourable opportunity now afforded me of improving my knowledge of high life, of which, influenced by a certain presentiment, or as the reader may perhaps think by the

self to Mr. Davison. My lord was vain enough, but his vanity was too well pampered to feed on the flattery of a valet: I never ventured, therefore, upon aught beyond the precincts of a profound deference. Nevertheless, by watching the moments, I found means to insinuate myself insensibly into my lord's good graces. In process of time, he began to notice me as something rather more than an automaton, or human machine, whose highest perfection was to prevent his wishes. Instead of occupying himself with a newspaper or a novel, as he was wont to do, while I dressed his hair, he now began to honour me with a question or remark which called for a reply; and as I improved upon this opening, his lordship, by progressive stages, at length fell into the habit of loose familiar conversation with me, and having satisfied himself that I was trustworthy, honoured me with his confidence.

It appeared that Lord Leighton, like too many others of his rank in life, though possessed of an ample fortune, found, or more correctly speaking, took care to make, the

ready money very scarce. Abandoned to pleasure, however, he concerned himself little about the state of his affairs, as long as they did not interrupt the smoothness of his career. But it sometimes happened that he was literally without specie, and his bankers impracticable — a coincidence so inconvenient, that he was obliged, much against his will, to task his ingenuity for present relief. My lord, who was of an open thoughtless temper, made no attempt to conceal these delicate embarrassments, which were a matter of notoriety in the

in cash, and at the same time send home a quantity of goods, for both which he would take his lordship's acceptance at a long date. The goods as soon as furnished were consigned to a Jew or pawnbroker, and upon this branch of the transaction, between the conscience of the vendor and that of the vendee, Lord Leighton was generally minus about a hundred and fifty per cent. What with his own exigencies, and those of his lady, which were scarcely less considerable, my lord had frequent occasion to resort to this kind of accommodation. To the world, he appeared the gayest of travellers on the road to ruin; but I, who saw him in *déshabillé*, had reason to believe that he was very far from enjoying that lightness of heart which he affected. Indeed, a man must be singularly defective both in head and heart who could really find happiness in such a career. Many a sigh have I heard involuntarily escape him; and in my opinion, he would gladly have pulled up, and even tried the experiment of what satisfaction was to be extracted from cultivating the social affections, had Lady Leighton given

him any encouragement ; but as her ladyship never failed to ridicule any such manifestations of sentiment, as she termed it, my lord, who was not qualified to withstand ridicule, was hurried consequently into twofold extravagance.

Common fame described Lord Leighton as a blackleg, but I doubt whether there were any grounds for such an imputation beyond the fact of his being a gambler. And now I must not omit a circumstance which redounds much to his honour. There was a young gentleman, named Dennis, whom an un-

After losing considerable sums at this place, Mr. Dennis, one night, being chafed by some satirical remark on his want of skill, challenged Lord Leighton to play ten games of écarté for five hundred pounds each. He selected my lord in a spirit of bravo, as being considered the greatest adept present at that particular game. My lord endeavoured to decline his rash proposal, but the young gentleman swore that if he was afraid to encounter him, he would challenge the room; upon which, my lord, knowing that others would not be so scrupulous, thought perhaps that, as the money was to be thrown away, he might as well pick it up as anybody else. To work then they went; my lord won eight games out of the ten, which, together with the by-bets, left him a winner of something near five thousand pounds. The infatuated young man, not satisfied that he had been beaten in almost every game by sheer superiority of play, insisted upon continuing, until Lord Leighton held his I. O. U's. to the amount of twelve thousand pounds and upwards. They then rose, poor Mr. Dennis being effect-

ally stripped, not only of all his presumption and conceit, but, as it subsequently turned out, of the remnant of his fortune. Lord Knighton was much moved at this latter information, which he extorted from his unfortunate adversary, when he called upon him the next day to take up his engagements. The pale countenance and subdued manner of the young gentleman excited the suspicions of my lord, who, with some difficulty, brought him to confess that after liquidating these claims, he would be left almost penniless.

it is no use moralizing, my lord ; here is your money, I believe, to the utmost fraction ; so give me those cursed scraps of paper, and let me be gone."

"Stay," said Lord Leighton, "are you really sure that last night's dose has accomplished a radical cure? Would you object to give me your word of honour never again to lose more than five pounds at one sitting?"

"You have as good a security as my word, my want of means," replied Dennis with a melancholy smile.

"But come," rejoined my lord, "to please me, give me your word of honour. Fortune is a capricious dame, and she may choose one day or other to put it again in your power to abuse her favours."

"To please your lordship then, I give you my word."

"Enough," cried his lordship, and to the astonishment of Mr. Dennis, he deliberately took that gentleman's acknowledgments from the table upon which they lay, and thrust them into the fire. "When I sat down with you

last night," he proceeded, " I intended nothing of this sort, believe me ; but in the course of the evening, forgive me for saying that I suspected you were losing more than you could conveniently pay, though I did not think it was quite so bad as you have told me. So now that's settled, and I'm heartily glad I've had it in my power to do you this service."

Mr. Dennis was of course overwhelmed with gratitude at this generous conduct, but his benefactor, who had no wish to prolong the scene, stopped him in the midst of his ardent

CHAPTER II.

HAD not the ridiculous failure of my Quixotic attempt to reform the abuses of an ill-regulated household been of too recent occurrence, I might have felt impelled by my great virtue to check the waste and plunder which prevailed among the domestics of Lord Leighton. I could not indeed forbear from throwing out an insinuation which my lord immediately took, but assured me that I might spare any allusion to that subject, as he had long been aware that he was cheated by his servants, and had made up his mind that it was preferable to lose a few hundreds a-year in this way than to worry his temper and occupy his time by quarrelling about the candle-ends and cheese-parings. This rebuke of course silenced

me, and I resolved that, as I could not prevent, I might as well take my share of the spoil.

Contrary, however, to my usual practice, on the present occasion I had little regard to the main chance. The allurements of pleasure, and the charms of elegant society, possessed me quite. All the leisure hours which my Julia did not engross, were spent at dinner-parties, balls, and the billiard-table; so that, far from hoarding my perquisites, I was out of pocket by my amusements. But I cannot say that I look back upon that period with regret; I

of his tribe, was the best-natured, civil, obliging fellow in the world, and was ever ready to accommodate me with an order on the fish-monger, and, in the most handsome manner, to offer his services whenever I wished to entertain a small party. As for the butler, he and I were sworn friends; so that I could always give my guests an excellent bottle of wine.

The parties at our house, in course of time, acquired the character of being among the most *recherché* things in town. By dint of rigid exclusivism, and open ridicule and contempt of all who did not belong to what we chose to style our set, we attained this celebrity, and became at once the admiration and the detestation of the rest of the world. I believe that I and my Julia may claim the merit of having achieved this reputation; my predecessor was a mere *roué*, who preferred pleasure to fashion, and passed the greater part of his time in low company. Mr. Patterson, the house-steward, was a good easy man, but had hitherto not lived in the best society; and as to Mrs. Potts, the housekeeper, she was fat and vulgar,

and therefore decidedly impracticable. But in Julia Peck I found a kindred spirit ; she was altogether superfine ; there were, indeed, very few persons that she would condescend to speak to ; and, when I first entered the family, she looked even upon me with disdain ; I believe it was her charming insolence that first made an impression upon my heart. Our subsequent coalition wrought these beneficial effects ; we were fired with the noble ambition of being leaders of *ton*, and we accomplished our object. Mr. Patterson was easily moulded to our views.

viduals redolent of gin, with swaggering gaits, and sinister aspects, who ogled the house-maids, ate with their knives, and sometimes, it was whispered, pocketed the silver forks. The superior taste of Miss Peck and her humble coadjutor resolved to reform this altogether. Henceforth we proposed to receive none, save ladies and gentlemen of the most eminent fashionables. These, indeed, were not easy of access, and were especially difficult to us, on account of the bad name which the house had obtained by the practices above mentioned. But what will not perseverance effect? Miss Peck, who had hitherto been kept in comparative obscurity by the second-rate circle in which she was condemned to move, now procured better introductions, and we mutually helped each other on. Her beauty and languishing refinement made a great sensation, and she was acknowledged a reigning belle; but I am concerned to say that, in the same proportion as my manners refined, my morals deteriorated by this mode of living.

Such, alas! is the necessary consequence of

the advance of civilization. A friendship which I formed at this time was alone wanting, effectually to detach my lingering footsteps from the paths of virtue. My new ally was one of the most brilliant characters of second-hand, high life. He was a fellow of infinite wit, the Sheridan of the world of valets and abigails. Like his illustrious prototype, Mr. O'Dienne (he was of Milesian origin also) was a borrower, and the greatest proficient I ever knew in that most useful and highly cultivated art. Such was his surprising genius, that he actually made it

edly tried to laugh it off as a joke. The greenhorn, however, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his friends, persevered in his application, swearing that he would not be *done out of his money*. O'Dienne, thereupon, borrowed the dross from a bystander, and paid the dun. The consequence was, that this rash young fellow's prospects in life were blasted. He was immediately *cut*, and losing his situation soon after this circumstance, such order was taken to prevent him getting another place, that he was eventually obliged to leave London.

Had not this anecdote been related to me by way of a friendly warning, it is possible that my strong repugnance to lending might have resisted even the captivating solicitation of O'Dienne, who very soon distinguished me by this mark of his favour. I say *distinguished*, for I subsequently learned that he was by no means indiscriminate in his applications. He repudiated the vulgar notion that one man's money is as good as another's.

Had he been selfish, cold-hearted, and un-

known-
knowledge the personal obligation
sometimes supposed to be incurred
he considered that the lender had
his countenance and protection ;
far from exclusive in his ideas, I
of course, choose to extend to a
claim of this nature.

I am happy to be able to rectify
deeming trait on the part of my friend
was, I fear, sadly deficient in
branch of morality. It was said,
not without truth, that many a criminal
nated at the Old Bailey, was owing
precept and example of this gentleman
was certainly an air of *bonhomie*,
ness about the man, which, combined
wit and knowledge of life was his

to affect the most offensive of all characters, that of a youthful hardened libertine. Happily for me, I retained a few grains of prudence and morality, which preserved me from the fate which usually befell Mr. O'Dienne's protégés. Amidst all my follies and extravagances, I could not be induced either to handle the dice-box, or to set up a mistress. I had soon reason to congratulate myself for my firmness upon these points, since they at length brought my friend to ruin, notwithstanding all his boasted talent and address. Nay, it was one of these treacherous accomplishments which proved the immediate cause of his destruction. To enable him to continue his visits to the gaming-table and answer the insatiable demands of his nymph, O'Dienne had, for some time past, availed himself of a dangerous art which he possessed, namely, that of imitative calligraphy—in other words, he had, from time to time, forged checks upon his gentleman's bankers.

Mr. Haythorne was a young gentleman who

had more money than wit, and who never, if he could help it, suffered himself to be diverted from pleasure by business; O'Dienne, encouraged by impunity, and pressed by frequent need, grew less circumspect in his irregular practices; in consequence of which, Mr. H. was one morning favoured with a visit by one of the partners of the banking-house with which he did business, who took the liberty of asking him whether such and such sums, which appeared on the debtor side of his account had been drawn by him. Mr.

moment, and effected his escape to Liverpool, before the ferrets of Bow Street could be set to work. He reached the land of freedom in safety, and Mr. Haythorne, who hated trouble and éclat, was content to stand the loss.

CHAPTER III.

THIS *éclaircissement* was the nine days' wonder of the subterranean circles, and a great deal of sincere indignation was vented against the lapsed valet by several of the fraternity, who feared that this "untoward event" might

and generous, to punish me for the failings of my friends. He alluded, however, to the transaction one day when I was assisting at his toilet ; gaily observing, after his fashion, that he could live free from suspicion that his servants forged upon him, since his bankers could no longer be induced to honour his real autograph.

I took salutary warning, however, from this circumstance, and determined that henceforth my deviations from the path of rectitude, should not be such as were irreparable. I did but little violence to my nature by restricting it within the boundary of this excellent resolution, and I gladly returned to the cultivation of an exquisite exclusivism, which was more germane to my taste than the debauchery in which I had been recently engaged. My dissipated conduct, however, had well nigh lost me the affections of Miss Peck ; for, in a rash moment, prompted by the libertinism of O'Dienne, I had ventured to propound dishonourable love to that immaculate fair, and received for my pains a severe repulse, and

an emphatic assurance that my baseness had for ever effaced my image from her heart. Rendered callous by profligacy, I heard my fate with calm resignation. I never even fell at her feet, nor intimated my intention to commit *felo de se*. I merely spread my hand upon my breast, and with a graceful obeisance, announced myself as the most miserable of mankind under her displeasure. Piqued at this behaviour, the fair Julia broke forth into an invective which, as it might be thought by some fastidious reader to contain epithets and

her father. This pantomimic flirtation — for such it was, as neither party understood the language in which the other spoke — tortured my bosom with the bitterest pangs of jealousy, although a stranger might have reasonably supposed that the extravagant gestures and grimaces, the satyr-like grin with which the Parisian gloated upon the object of his admiration; and above all, the pestiferous exhalations of his sighs must have excited ridicule or disgust, rather than any softer sentiment. But I could not behold the beautiful Julia gazing on the grotesque features of this animal, and endeavouring to understand, or to appear to understand, his unintelligible chatter and gesticulations, without pain; for who shall set bounds to the caprice of womankind? and might not this creature be, as, in fact, I heard he insinuated that he was, a caprice of Miss Peck's?

After several vain attempts to be an unconcerned spectator of their proceedings, I ventured to remonstrate with the young lady upon the bad taste which she exhibited in admitting the attentions of this Frenchman, and upon

which I informed her, as a friend, that the world were not sparing of their remarks. Miss Peck answered heroically that she despised the censoriousness of the world, and required no advice from me as to the regulation of her conduct. I then reproached her for her cruelty, and made a plaintive appeal to past recollections, which brought on a very moving scene. She threw herself into my arms, wept upon my bosom, and told me that we must part for ever, for such was the irrevocable decree of fate. My beloved Julia was so much in the habit

from me, and my mind was distracted by a thousand conjectures. None of them, however, approached the truth which another week developed. Lady Leighton eloped with an officer of the Guards; she was accompanied by her faithful friend and confidant Miss Peck; and her ladyship's gallant was attended by the French valet, whose intercourse with my Julia had caused me so much uneasiness.

The first intimation that I received of this event was very abrupt and unexpected. Early one morning, before I had finished my first sleep, a housemaid broke into my bedroom with a noise which immediately put Morpheus to flight, and in breathless accents, exclaimed, "Oh, do ye get up this moment, Mr. Wiggins, lard love ye; here's a pretty kettle of fish! My lady never comed home last night, and 't is reported as how she's a-gone off with a dragon hoficer of the Gords! and Miss Peck, she's gone with her; and here's a passel, which Mary found in her bedroom, and which, she says, is directed for you." With this, she handed me a small brown-paper packet, addressed, sure

enough, to myself, in the handwriting of the fair Julia.

I immediately ordered the lingering housemaid to quit the apartment, and proceeded with great anxiety and curiosity to investigate the contents. Upon tearing off the wrapper, I found another of less coarse materials, and which, to my surprize, exhibited a somewhat oleaginous appearance. I removed this and two other envelopes, each of which was still more unctuous than its immediate predecessor, when I came to a letter and a sub-

ation with my lady, who is the best of ladies, and the more's the pity that she should be oblegeed, by cruel fat, to becom an *unfortunat* female wich she is now becom in consequence of having *eloped* with Colnel Calloway of the granodeer gards, wich nobody can wonder at who knows how she was *neglected* by my lord, who, to my certain knowledge, went after other *wimmin*, and *neglected* his true and lawful *wif*. O Mr. Wiggins, if you had been but true to me, you might have been spared the *torchure* of now knowing that I am about to becom the *wif* of another. But you may thank your own *desolat* conduck for it all. Ever since you becam friends with that Mr. O'Jane, you lost all your *modesty*, and becam *impidint* and *desolat*, wich lost you my *affections*, wich you could not have cared much about to have gone on in that *desolat* manner. But that 's all gone by now, and we must nivr think of each other mor, and I don't wish to reproch you with the *passed*. I own your *inswinuating maners* made an impreshun on my virgin hart; but when I found you turned out *desolat*, I

to the war. Some say
Monshure le Bow, is the appy ma
have me. Though he is a *forecner*
genteel fassinating man, and sev
my acquaintance would have glad
him if he would have had them
none of your *gallant, gay, Lothari*
gins, and never would be divarted
love by any of there ciren char
Bow and me are to reside in P
keep a *coffee*. We are all going
that *delightful capital*, and I hope
this comes to hand we shall be on
so pray tell my lord it will be n
ever to purchase us, as my lady
niver to be torn from the arms
who means to make an honest w
again as soon as the nation is deta

“ I have taken the *libberty* to inclose a lock of my *hair*, which, I hope, will prove exceptable to keep for my *sake*. I hope, Mr. Wiggins, you won't think I have used you *ill* in this transaction with Monshure Le Bow ; but, as my lady made me her *confident* and *merkery* between her and the colnel, and mad it a *pint* with me to *support* and *assist* her in this *trial*, I couldn't refuse so good a lady, and as I was an *unpertected female*, and the *sensorus world* might make free with my *cracter* in consequence, I thought it better that I should accep the colnel's *grashus offer* to marry Monshure Le Bow, wich I should not have *looked* at if I hadn't been afraid of my *crackter* being *implecated* in this *transaction*. If ever you come to Parris, I *hope* you will give me a *call*. I will trouble you with another line, please God, when I am settled. Pray, except my LUV.

“ I remain your obedient,

“ JULIA PECK.”

CHAPTER IV.

It became my painful duty to communicate this unpleasant intelligence to my lord. He manifested a slight shock when the matter was first broached; but quickly recovering himself, affected to receive it with great

from his thoughts. He did not seclude himself from society a single day in consequence ; the world was not backward in condemning the heartlessness and indecency of this conduct. Some even went so far as to surmise that the elopement of Lady Leighton was connived at by my lord.

Nothing could be further from truth and justice than these censures and suspicions. His lordship could not always wear the mask, and it sometimes happened to me to be present when it was laid aside. Deep sighs would then bespeak the grief which lay at the bottom of his heart, and when he gazed on three lovely children who bore his name, born in wedlock, indeed, but of dubious parentage, the agony of his feelings more than once burst forth in tears. It was evident that he dared not obey the yearnings of his nature, lest he should caress the offspring of his dishonour. Upon investigation, there appeared ground for supposing that her ladyship's infidelity was not of recent date, but unfortunately no evidence was forthcoming as to the

precise period when she ceased to be virtuous. Lord Leighton's misery would have been greatly alleviated could either of his children have been exempted from the possibility of being suppositions; but there was no satisfactory proof that the eldest-born, and heir apparent, must be his own child. There is perhaps none of the ills to which flesh is heir more cruelly torturing than this; time can soothe every other affliction save this one, which must of necessity endure the life of the putative father or child, and may cling to an illustrious name

which I witnessed two executions in the house. In less than two years after Lady Leighton's elopement, my lord owed upwards of six years purchase of his income ; his estate was so strictly entailed, that he could neither raise money on mortgage, nor cut a stick of timber ; and his health was so much impaired, that he found it impossible to effect an assurance of his life. His old allies, the Jews, therefore, would no longer listen to him upon any terms ; consequently, Lord Leighton, sometime one of the most potential members of high life, was left, deserted by all his brilliant friends and acquaintances, in a state bordering upon destitution.

I was the only one of those who had basked in the sunshine of his prosperity, that now adhered to his fallen fortunes. It was left to me to take care that he did not die of absolute neglect, in the obscure lodging whither I had removed him, when excluded from his mansion in Grosvenor Street. Had not the privilege of his rank protected him, those creditors, who had never in his better days ap-

proached his presence save with the most obsequious adulation, would have left him to rot in a gaol. I never suffered my respect or attention to be in the least degree diminished by his adversity, but remained with him until his death, which was precipitated by care, in conjunction with the effects of a debauched life. No sooner was his lordship beyond the reach of mortal aid, or negligence, than some relatives came forward, prompted, I fear, more by family pride than any respect for the deceased, to grace his remains with

CHAPTER V.

POOR Lord Leighton's death took place towards the close of a protracted season, and a few days before the Association rose for the session ; a period, I need hardly observe, when a man would least wish to find himself out of place, since small was his chance of getting employment for many months. Moreover, the times wore a gloomy aspect ; recent events had alarmingly increased the growing disposition to vilify the menial aristocracy,— I allude more particularly to that unfortunate business of O'Dienne's. The backslidings of a functionary so eminent had produced a great sensation, and had led to inquiry, the result of which, as I have before noticed, was to implicate persons in every department, from the steward's room to the scullery. Such an ex-

posé at any time could not have failed to be damaging, but coincident with a strong tendency to depreciate, it went to affect the very existence of our order. The clamour which had always been more or less prevalent against the upper classes of our community for their alleged immorality, rapacity, insolence, and sloth had now become louder than ever. Persons who had been accustomed to consider us as necessary evils, began openly to express their doubts that society could go on without us ; and many more, with whom we had

they were sometimes derisively called by their opponents, in allusion to their views upon a question which had been made the Shibboleth of opinion, — loudly asserted that matters had been brought to this pass solely by the bigoted obstinacy of the majority in refusing to listen to their counsels ; while these, on the other hand, as confidently maintained that the pernicious doctrines and mean popularity-hunting practices of the Opposition had led to this perilous state of affairs. Under these circumstances, it was to be expected that a trial of strength would take place, and accordingly the leader of opposition gave notice of a motion.

On the important day there was, for the time of year, an unusually full attendance of members ; and the greatest excitement prevailed until the moment when the Chairman called upon Mr. Diggles, who rose amidst profound silence.

After the usual prefatory recital of the peculiar circumstances of pain and embarrassment under which he was placed, and conse-

quent claims upon the indulgence of his audience, the honourable gentleman proceeded to draw an appalling picture of the present state and prospects of the Association. He said they had entirely lost the confidence of the public. Numerous establishments had been greatly reduced, and very many might be said to have been wholly broken up. Absenteeism had increased to a frightful extent; some of the first families choosing to emigrate rather than endure any longer the tyranny and profligacy of their servants. (Here the honour-

He repeated that they were servants, paid servants, whose duty it was—whose duty, and nothing more, it was—to be honest, industrious, and respectful. (The speaker was again interrupted by ironical cheers, cries of oh, oh! murmurs of disgust, and a few faint Hears!) He knew that his language was unpalatable, and he considered it one of the worst symptoms of the corrupt condition into which they were fallen that they could not bear to be reminded of their real character and duties. He wished to introduce no democratic innovations; he thought the institution of first and second tables, a wise and salutary institution; he did not wish to do away with that—far from it. He was not against a major-domo; he thought him a useful and even necessary officer; he, for one, would not abolish him. But what he wanted was, to do away with sinecures, and establish the principle that no man should be eligible to that Association, or entitled to its protection, who did not earn his salary in actual service. He could not, of course, nor did he wish to interfere with the silly vanity of individuals

who might feel pleasure in lining their halls with what were called showmen and supernumeraries; but he contended that such useless and dissolute persons should not be permitted to bring discredit upon the Association by their profligate and insolent habits. He would disqualify and discountenance them altogether. The honourable gentleman thought also that the practice of putting heads of families to the ban for breach of privilege, was become a crying abuse. Every gentleman whose unreasonable demands were not complied with, or who chose

this privilege, but it was a weapon that should be used sparingly, and with great caution, otherwise it would assuredly be turned back upon their own bosoms. (Hear, hear!) What he wished to see established was, a real and mutual responsibility between them and their patrons, not the one-sided reciprocity which then existed; and he trusted the day was not far distant when this great principle should be recognized, that fidelity to their employers was the best calculated to insure the truest and most lasting prosperity to themselves. (Hear!) The honourable gentleman concluded by moving a string of resolutions embodying the principle topics of his speech.

The motion having been seconded, several members rose; but a tall majestic figure, somewhat inclining to *embonpoint*, with a splendid-powdered head, and a white waistcoat, having caught the Chairman's eye, proceeded to address the Association.

The honourable gentleman would not detain them many minutes; but he could not resist saying a few words on behalf of a body of men

who had been severely, and as he thought, most unjustly, reflected on by the honourable gentleman. He alluded to those gentlemen whose superior personal endowments gave them a certain station in every distinguished and well-regulated family. He could say from his own experience of those gentlemen, that no class of persons bore their faculties more meekly. (Hear, and laughter.) He would repeat, that considering the temptations to which they were exposed—(hear, hear, hear!)—considering, he said, the temptations to which they were ex-

put down men of figure and fashion, would be treated with the contempt which it deserved. (Hear, hear !)

Mr. Painter was not sorry that he had given way to his honourable friend who had just sat down ; for his modest and manly defence of the body of which he was once a distinguished ornament, could not fail to make an impression on the Association. He believed, however, that the defence was unnecessary. (Hear, hear !) It was evident that the attack upon that magnificent corps was only a part of the insidious system, the end and aim of which was the subversion of the Association. (Hear, hear, hear !) He would ask what would become of aristocratic state—of opulent display—if these, their prominent features, the pillars, he might say, of their grandeur, were to be removed ? What could be more dignified or imposing than the stately symmetry, arrayed in good apparel, of these showmen, or supernumeraries, as the honourable gentleman was pleased, sarcastically, to term them ? How imperfect would be my lady's well-appointed

equipage without the finishing stroke,—the tall squire with the gold-headed cane, hanging gracefully from the standards! how poorly would my lord's sideboard show, unflanked by these appendages! And was he to be told, forsooth! that, because these gentlemen did not shine as polishers of silver spoons and mahogany tables, they were to be regarded as sinecurists? Far be it from him to entertain such low narrow-minded opinions. Nay, he did not hesitate to say, much as he esteemed the mechanical members of the profession, he could not com-

divided that party into three classes ; first, Those who, having made their fortunes by the very practices which they now so loudly condemned, were about to retire from the profession ; secondly, Those who being shut out by the meanness of their abilities from attaining rank and eminence, wished to bring everybody else down to their level ; and, thirdly, Traitors, (he could not designate them by any milder term,) who on some hypocritical pretence, or from some criminal motive, were in the interests of their employers, contrary to those of the Association. He then adverted to the good old times when English noblemen and gentlemen kept up twice the number of retainers that they did now ; and contrasted the liberal hospitality of those days, with the reduced and shabby way of living at present in vogue. He thought that retrenchment had gone as far as it could go, consistently with carrying on the government and constitution. He begged to assure the Association, that he yielded to no man as a staunch practical reformer. He was old enough to recollect the time of *vails*. He was free to

confess, that the extent to which they had been carried was an abuse. No man could then afford to visit much at his friends' houses, unless he possessed a considerable fortune. He recollected a proposition having been made to relinquish some of the most unjustifiable of these *raids*; and, he verily believed, if that proposition had been yielded to, the system itself might have been preserved to that day. But it was overruled, as he thought, unwisely; the system had been overturned, and the consequence had been, that all liberality and generosity in the

profession, to which he had the honour to belong. Without making invidious comparisons, he should take leave to say that, although one of those humble individuals whom the honourable gentleman had not very genteelly, or courteously, designated as plate-polishers, he considered himself quite as good a man as the honourable gentleman, or any set of empty conceited coxcombs * of whom he might think proper to become the champion. (Order, order ! and Hear !)

Mr. Painter explained.

A long, and not very animated debate ensued. One honourable gentleman entered into a tedious harangue, to show that they had never prospered since flour and pomatum had been superseded by natural hair and bear's grease. Another gentleman, of still more profound views, deprecated the narrow grounds within which the question was debated ; and

* In consequence of these expressions a correspondence took place between the honourable member, and one of the gentlemen supposed to be referred to ; but, I am happy to say, the affair was arranged without bloodshed, highly to the credit and satisfaction of both parties.

... expected in the course of the
world became more enlightened
tion, and the grand truth was no
settled, that the more limited
household establishment, the bet
affairs conducted. For his own
pected with calm composure the
speedy arrival of that day, when
which he belonged would die a n
merged in the good sense of r
steam-machinery. The honourable
proceeding in this philosophic str
was interrupted by shouts of laug
ing, imitations of the crowing of
whistle of a steam-engine, and
nable, discordant noises, which o
resume his seat.

Several other gentlemen addre

CHAPTER VI.

I **NEED** not trouble the reader with my opinions on this momentous question. The truth is, my mind was balanced between conflicting arguments, and I thought, like the discreet knight of De Coverly, that much was to be said on both sides. Besides, I was one of that diffident class of politicians who prefer going with the majority, when they venture to commit themselves to an opinion or a vote. As yet, I had hazarded neither in the Association upon any question of party politics, having been content with the reputation of a man of business, which I had acquired as Chairman of the Committee of my District.

The divisions in the councils, coupled with the depressed state of the profession, afforded me matter of anxious cogitation, and I seriously

doubted whether it would not be expedient to transfer my talents to another field. I was certainly tired of the life of a fine gentleman valet. I had taken my fill of pleasure and folly, and was minded now to redeem the time and money which I had wasted by applying myself henceforth to the aggrandizement of my fortunes with as much steadiness and ingenuity, and at the same time with as much honesty, as might be practicable.

My necessities — for my once flourishing purse was sadly attenuated — urged me to lose

unsophisticated rustics. Great, indeed, was the contrast between the raw boy whom they had sent abroad to seek his fortune, some ten years ago, and the finished, and, indeed, somewhat *blazé* man of the world, which I now considered myself. Even Smallcombe himself in his prime, was, after all, but a provincial in comparison with me.

As my route lay through Bath, I proposed to sojourn there a few days for the sake of *auld lang syne*; and to make known my prosperity to any of my former acquaintances, whom I might happen to find still vegetating in that much calumniated city. I had been informed that my kinsman, and quondam employer, Smallcombe, had lately opened a very extensive establishment at Bath, on the fruits of a second bankruptcy, which he had accomplished in London. Although I had frequently passed his shop, which was situated in a fashionable quarter, I had never renewed my acquaintance with him in town, by reason of the disgust which I still retained for his fraudulent conduct. But time having, at length, extin-

connection, he was surprised at the
between my former and present con-
immediately recollecting himself, to
praise due to his sagacity in having
rise in life. As he, doubtless, con-
my spruce and prosperous appear-
wanted nothing from him, he welcomed
great cordiality, and made me aware
of his services. He insisted upon
with him, that we might talk over
and mutually recount the principles
each other's lives since we had parted.

To this I agreed, and at five o'clock
to my friend's house, where I found
set out with a degree of liberality
worthy a gentleman of fortune.
hesitate to rally my cousin on

down to the repast with that gaiety of heart which the sight of good cheer usually inspires. After dinner my host produced a bottle of excellent old port, and, inviting me to occupy one of two comfortable leathern arm-chairs, placed at each side of the chimney, called for the history of my adventures. I gratified his wishes very copiously ; and, barring some few trifling suppressions and exaggerations, suggested by self-love, I gave him a tolerably faithful narrative. He professed himself to be much edified and entertained by my memoirs, and complimented me on the address and spirit with which I had hitherto played my part in the game of life. He was pleased to add, that I was evidently destined for, and qualified to perform in, higher scenes than any of those in which I had hitherto figured. I was flattered by an opinion which coincided with my own, and in return for my cousin's civility, begged to be favoured with a history of his fortunes since we had parted under such untoward circumstances. He immediately complied with my request.

events to happen within the space
I suppose you are aware,—as I b
you were one of my creditors in
commission,—that I obtained my c
paying one and ninepence in the p
after that, as you also know,
house in the Haymarket.—By tl
it very ill of you that you nev
me a call, the many years th
in the actual neighbourhood.—A
not get on very well for want
connection in London, and from
counter the opposition of other
same line. But I managed to
and, after a time, got two or tl
troductions to young sparks of f
I gave to understand I never

up, and I got the name of a capital fellow, who never asked for money. It is a positive fact that I never sent in an account, even to a good man, before he had been three years in my books; nor did I ever press for payment, until double that time had elapsed. Of course I found that the debtor who did not pay in three years, was less able and willing to book up in six, when his account was swelled to double the size. For a beginner like me, who wanted to make my footing sure, it would not do to take out a writ, or even dun for my money; so, as soon as the credit side of my account showed five figures, I got a friend to strike a docket, and so I collected my debts, and was then ready for a fresh start. That's one way of making a fortune at the West-end, as you, of course, perfectly well know.

“After my affairs were settled, I found myself well enough off to think of matrimony. I had been for some time under promise to a very handsome young lady, whom a very rich nobleman preferred to his own wife, and who

...coming for money, you know,
agreed, that as soon as we should
a certain sum in our respective call
together as man and wife, and
teel house in the country. It so
just after I was gazetted, the Mar
of my Eliza. Luckily, she was
situation which made the article
to get rid of, so he was glad e
her receipt in full of all demands
sand pounds. This, with a matten
sand pounds which she had sa
earnings, made her a pretty good f
this, we married, and six weeks
mony my dear wife presented m
boy, but in so doing, unfortunately
life.

“ This melancholy event ent

treble it in another ten years. By that time I calculated upon having realized a handsome fortune, in which case I mean to retire and bring my boy up a gentleman, especially as there is a considerable likelihood of his having noble blood in his veins. My original intention was to start again in London ; but upon second considerations, I thought I should do better here, and so it has turned out. I have been here, now, nearly two years, and have got possession of the largest trade in the place, as you may perceive by the extent of my establishment."

CHAPTER VII.

I CONGRATULATED my cousin rity, and reciprocated all the compliments he had paid me on my dexterity getting on in the world. He admitted to the praise due to industry and perseverance, but with great consideration, disclaimed any merit for his portion of his gains, which, as he served, was owing to a piece of good fortune that might have happened to any one. I inquired after my old friend Mr

“Ah, poor fellow!” said Sam, “he was unfortunate. After he left

were detected in his accounts. The consequence was a voyage to New South Wales, where, I understand, he has lately set up in business as a banker. He is a clever fellow, however, and sure to get on, wherever he goes. He had a good opinion of you, and said you were sure to do. We'll drink his health, if you please."

In answer to my inquiry whether he had seen, or kept up any correspondence with my family, the only intelligence he could afford me was, that my brother Bill had recently got into trouble, and was, in fact, to take his trial at the next assizes, on a charge of embezzlement brought against him by his master. I was already aware that one of my sisters had become a farmer's wife, and that my father had the reputation of being a prosperous man.

Of my former friends and fellow-shopmen he could give no account, save and except Piminy, who, to my surprise, he informed me, no longer wore stiffening in his cravats, nor straps to his pantaloons. He was married to a pork butcher's daughter, set up in business,

of all places in the world, at Bristol, and of all trades, as a hosier and woollen draper! Smallcombe himself, I should observe, was much altered since I had last seen him. His face bore marks of good cheer, which did not at all improve its comeliness, and his stomach, freed from the restraints of girth and vest, was suffered to expand at ease in loose and ample garments. He must then, indeed, have been considerably turned of forty, an age at which men are prone to consult substantial comfort, in preference to empty appearances.

was silent for some minutes, abstracted in earnest thought, and I sipped my wine without disturbing his reverie, which I hoped might produce some plan for my welfare.

“I have it,” cried he, at length slapping his thigh in an ecstasy. “Simon, my boy, what do you say to setting up as a swell at once?”

“How do you mean?” asked I, not altogether comprehending his proposal.

“Why, come gentleman over the nobs at Bath. You’re as fit for the line as many of the chaps who wear out the stones in Milsom Street. You say you want to be out of London for a few months, and I think you can’t employ your leisure time better. You may make your fortune, mun; ten to one you a’n’t smoked, and if you are, you can but make your lucky, and no harm done.”

This hopeful scheme so unexpectedly started, caused me to meditate in my turn. I did not immediately perceive the profit to be derived from such a speculation, and I was at first inclined to look upon it as a mere waste of time; for the idea of figuring in the Bath circles of

fashion hardly flattered the ambition of one who had played a prominent part in metropolitan high life below stairs. I coolly, therefore, begged my kinsman to favour me with an explanation of the advantages which he conceived might result from such a scheme.

Smallcombe was evidently surprised, and somewhat disappointed, at finding that his splendid suggestion had affected me so slightly.

"Oh," said he, "I'm your most obedient humble servant. I should have thought there couldn't have been much doubt about that. It

aged goods were brought, as the last chance of getting them off hand."

"Not so bad as that neither," said my cousin: "I don't mean to say, if you wanted an article worth a plum, that this is the place; but if you could be satisfied with four or even five figures, the thing's to be had. I suppose, however, a matter of eight or ten thousand wouldn't suit a spark like you."

"Ten thousand!" repeated I musingly; "hum!"

"Now, you're too bad, upon my soul! Simon. You don't mean to pretend to say that you would hesitate at a ten thousand pounder?"

"Why," said I, "the fact is, Mr. Smallcombe, there is something to be said about that. When a young man thinks of disposing of himself in matrimony, it can't be worth his while, unless he gets a good price; and though I admit that ten or even eight thousand pounds down, is not to be hastily refused; yet, when one comes to consider the necessary expenses of housekeeping, the charges of a family, per-

the article."

"Well," said Smallcombe, "not give up trying your fortune; better, you know, such a swell as

"But," I rejoined, "there would be no lay necessary; and how am I induced?"

"Come," replied my cousin, "what I'll do with you. I'll let you have the use of my first floor, and stand with your gold and silk stockings, provided you give me an annuity of fifty pounds a year. A hundred pounds, the day of your marriage, if you say fairer than that, can I?"

"Those terms I would readily have accepted," returned I, "in case I made up my mind to the experiment. But then, a

be given out that you're a man of fortune; and if any further questions are asked, you have only to say that your family reside in Dorsetshire, which, you know, is no more than the truth. I shall take care to insinuate that I knew you formerly as a customer of mine, and a very fashionable young gentleman in town. This will be quite sufficient, depend upon it, to procure you admittance to the first society in the place."

I told him I would take a day to consider the proposal. I did so, and determined upon the enterprise. I lacked not a sufficiency of modest assurance to qualify me for such an undertaking; besides, I could not but agree with my friend, that I had probably, at least, as much merit as the average of the Milsom Street loungers. It was decided, therefore, that I should, without delay, take measures for carrying the plan into execution.

CHAPTER VI

My projected visit to my :
poned, that no time might be
ing this notable adventure. W
way and boldly to work. I as
in Smalcombe's first-floor, w
handsome apartments, and, as
against suspicion, as to give it
cratic turn, I determined for
least, with the concurrence of f
after the manner of the ancient
derna, to give a kind of patri
humble patronymic, which I pr
by the prefixure of FIVE; so
name at the Pantheon and F

appearance at the first public ball at the Assembly Rooms. I had not been many minutes in the room, before the elegant potentate, who then filled the throne of Nash, slid towards me, and with a graceful compliment of welcome, expressed his ambition to be serviceable in facilitating my introduction to the best company. Passing by this polite offer, I requested him, and in listless accents, to do me the favour of pointing out the most distinguished people present. The obliging functionary readily complied. He first directed my attention to a glittering mummy at the further extremity of the room.

“That thin old lady,” said he, “at the upper end of the peeress’s bench, who wears a profusion of diamonds, is the dowager of an Irish peer. She is immensely rich, and gives the best parties in Bath. You must be introduced to her. The young lady sitting next her ladyship, is her niece, to whom it is supposed she will leave all her fortune.” This intimation was communicated in a low key, and with a very significant contortion of feature. “A

informant had given the sanction to every young gentleman who placed for the last dozen years from the young lady's appearance have repelled many and me Mammon in the shape of Cupid.

The M. C. then offered to borrow my permission to proceed but I checked his impatience there was no hurry, and whether there were any people Bath? To say the truth, this of nonchalance was affected to anxious interest I felt in the to my inquiry; for I thought that among the ball-room lounge he some water-drinker of new.

friends. But I was relieved from my trepidation by the reply of the M. C., who, though he enumerated several persons, fortunately named none that I had, to the best of my recollection, ever before seen or heard of.

After he had finished his catalogue, I was proceeding to extract some further intelligence from him, when his attention was drawn towards the extremity of the room, where the Lady Kilbarry and the other quality were seated, by an ominous commotion, which seemed to have arisen in that quarter. Elevated voices were heard, and the eyes of a great part of the assembly were attracted thither. The potentate silenced me with a "hush!" and erected his anxious ear to catch the import of the unusual animation. Suddenly he broke from me, and hastened towards the spot. Prompted by curiosity, I followed him, and witnessed a scene which afforded me a great deal of amusement. The rich dowager, her gemmed head shaking, partly with palsy, and partly passion, grasped with her left hand the arm of her young companion,

her, with arms a-kimbo, and with ire.

A good deal of incoherence passing between those parties in vain endeavoured to ascertain the nature of the misunderstandings existed between them. On epithets "insolent,"—"vulgar" were uttered in a disdainful manner; the still more emphatic "low creature,"—"daughter," were distinctly said; however, it appeared that La was, somehow or another, the for which the aunt kept that have before observed, the emotion as though she were

contending powers at the expense of the unfortunate damsel. Such was the impression of others besides myself, for a highly essenced young gentleman who stood behind me, offered to bet two to one on the "Countess," which was taken immediately with eagerness by a bystander, who proved to be a well-known sporting squire, on the ground that, "if the *fat* ~~un~~ had the advantage in weight, t'other would probably be the quickest fighter."

This indecorous collision was, however, happily prevented by the interposition of the Master of the Ceremonies, of whose approach, the disputants, in the heat of argument, had not been aware. But no sooner had he notified his presence, than both ladies at once appealed to his decision. It then appeared that the portly dame, who was indeed no less than a Countess, had objected to Lady Kilbarry's niece sitting on the peeresses' bench, a post of honour to which she was not entitled. Lady Kilbarry, on the other hand, had peremptorily insisted on the young lady retaining her place, and hence the strong language which

ensued. The Countess called upon the Master of the Ceremonies to do his duty, and threatened if he did not decide in her favour, never to set *foot* in the rooms again, as long as she lived; the Irish downer, on the other hand, declared that if she was so insulted, she would not only withdraw her support from the public balls, but throw open her house regularly on those nights when they were held.

Distracted by the conflicting demands of these two powerful feudatories, the unhappy potentate stood the image of perplexity, and drawing forth

shadow of a sovereign had recourse to the weak arts of conciliation. Afraid to offend either party, he humbly proposed to accommodate the difference. He ventured, in subdued accents, and with a deprecatory glance at that haughty dame, to admit that her ladyship had infringed the strict rule, but he trusted and hoped that the Countess would concede, and that Lady Kilbarry would accept as a favour, the permission to introduce her niece, (of course presuming there was a place unoccupied,) to the privileged part of the room. To this, the Countess, who seemed to be in the main a good-natured old woman, was willing to agree, observing that she meant no offence to the young lady, but that she had no idea of putting up with encroachment. Her antagonist ladyship condescended not to make any reply, but with a smile of derision, rose from her seat, and motioning her *protégée* to accompany her, majestically swept away, followed by the timid footsteps of the *arbiter elegantiarum*.

The Countess being thus left in posses-

and shrugs, others with the m
quiescence of bitter words and
was curious to know the sec
this fracas, which might be us
making my way in society. I r
it from the voluntary communic
gentleman who had evidently syn
me in the amusement with which I
the scene. He informed me that
was the daughter of a pawnbro
who died, leaving her a large
which, when somewhat advance
had purchased the alliance of
peer, who, dying without issue,
their marriage, his widow had s
wisely judging that it was the p
would be enabled to derive the g

humble dependant, whose obsequiousness and endurance, it was supposed, would be eventually rewarded by the bulk of her patroness's riches. Lady Kilbarry naturally placed a great value on the commodity for which she had paid so high a price—namely, her coronet ; and regarded with extreme jealousy every person who happened to possess equal, or superior claims to herself, in respect of precedence. For this reason, she bore a great hatred to the Countess; the more especially, because she ranked a step higher in the peerage, and was better born than herself; the Countess being of good Irish extraction, and the widow of an English Earl. These advantages were gall and wormwood to the inferior dowager, who endeavoured to counterbalance them by her wealth, in which she greatly exceeded her rival. She not only entertained on a much greater scale of splendour, but affected exclusivism in her society, and stigmatized the company at the house of the Countess with the opprobrious epithets of “tag, rag, and bobtail.”

She did not spare even the personal defects of

...very much interested. The
part was by no means slow in
attacks; and, sometimes, in the
wrath, did not hesitate to be
more vigorous than polished, &
aggressor. Each of these great
party in the place; but thou
espoused the cause of the Cou
most numerous and virulent, L
faction was composed of all wh
fashion and refinement.

To this account of high life
I listened with a superior air of d
I flattered myself was calculat
my communicative friend with
my importance. Such, indeed,
the effect produced; for the latte
out to be a real indignation. D

might become better acquainted, and I condescended to encourage his advances. I permitted him, likewise, at his particular request, to procure me a card for a ball, which was to be given the following evening by a leader of *ton*.

CHAPTER IX.

My new acquaintance, who rejoiced in the name of Coppin, sent me next morning, according to promise, a card of invitation to Mrs. Blades's fancy ball at the Assembly Rooms, accompanied with a polite note, pro-

suggestion ; not, however, without some well-acted surprise at the difference between the hours of this place, and those of "town," to which I had been accustomed. In the course of conversation, I let drop, as if incidentally, the names of several persons of the highest rank and fashion, mentioning them familiarly by their unadorned styles and titles. As dead men tell no tales, I made very frequent reference to "my poor friend Leighton," as though he had been my most intimate crony. These hints and allusions, caused the eyeballs of Mr. Coppin greatly to distend with awe and admiration, and effectually checked an incipient desire which I had observed in that person on the preceding evening to insinuate that he was not altogether a stranger to London life. He verily believed, no doubt, that I was a first-rate exquisite.

With this notion of my superiority, he led me to expect continued amusement from the further exhibition of the natives, whom he undertook to show up for my benefit. At his instance, I dined with him at the York House,

100

the boarding-school, with face patched, a huge structure plastered with powder and pomatum upon her little head, and her sylph-like form hooped and furbelowed after the fashion of Queen Anne, whirled round and round in the embrace of a booted and spurred heavy dragoon,—a spectacle enough to raise her great-great-grandam from the dead. In juxtaposition to this character, was to be observed a mellow maiden of forty and five, habited for Terpsichore, but looking a Tisiphone — a moody spectatress of the dance in which, notwithstanding she assumed to be its tutelary goddess, it was too evident she had not yet been invited to participate.

Turning from this unamiable object, my eye rested successively on various grotesque figures; such as long lanky youths with sapient countenances dressed as kings and statesmen; several raven-haired Hamlets, and yellow-haired Romeos, middle-aged gentlemen very facetious in the costumes of Falstaff, Punchinello, and Bombastes. There were likewise,

a gigantic Tom Thumb, and a prodigious baby weighing about eighteen stone in a go-cart, besides a great abundance of Turks, heroes, vestal virgins, and Swiss peasants. I ought not to omit to mention the unusually large proportion of old ladies present, a proof that Bath is not undeserving the reputation it bears, of being remarkably favourable to female longevity. These antiques were, for the most part, magnificently set in diamonds.

After I had sufficiently amused myself by looking on, I applied to my friend Mr. Coppin

affairs from an obscure channel into one of affluence and prosperity. The King of France,* when sojourning in this city an exile, happened on one occasion to be troubled with an indigestion, in consequence, I suppose, of indulging too freely in the pleasures of the table. This little doctor had the good luck to be called in, and very soon succeeded in setting his most Christian Majesty's stomach to rights again; for which service, the grateful Bourbon, when restored to his throne, sent his physician a patent of nobility, and the cross of St. Louis, and I believe allows him, moreover, a pension of some thousand francs. Upon this, M. Le Baron reared his head, sought and obtained the hand of an elderly young lady with a fortune of twenty thousand pound, set up a yellow chariot, performed some extraordinary cures in desperate cases of the vapours, and, in short, became a very fashionable physician. He now enjoys the best practice in the place, as you may believe, when I tell you that he numbers among his patients almost all those

* Louis XVIII.

in capital letters, and given thus :

“ And pray,” said I, in the same tone and dialect of the — for I should observe that after mature deliberation upon preference to that of a high fashion, because the former is accessible to the meanest class, the latter, though it has no pretension to being historic, is extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible to counterfeit. ”

said I, “ tell me, for Gad’s sake, how can I contravene the mawkishness of the flange of the turban to correspond? It is powerful enough to infect one with a fever.”

“ That lady,” answered the other with an obsequious laugh, “ is no less than the wife of a London

Knight's health, which is impaired by overfeasting. They have hired one of the best houses in the upper part of the town, and entertain sumptuously. The young ladies enjoy the reputation of being heiresses, and are, therefore, much in request, notwithstanding they have red arms, and clip the King's English. Yonder is the Knight himself, shining forth in the uniform of the city militia, in which distinguished corps, he bears, I believe, the rank of colonel. He is chuckling vigorously at some witticism which he has just whispered in the ear of that starched old maid, who votes, him, I'll promise you, a most agreeable man, full of wit and anecdote."

Coppin, who seemed to be acquainted with the private history of every person in the room, favoured me with the particulars of each individual in order, as I pointed them out.

I began to be apprehensive lest his inquiring mind, and satirical tongue, should be brought to bear upon myself. I signified my wish, therefore, to enter into the crowd, purposing to be introduced by him to some of the lead-

his opinion of my importance
sufficiently ready to fulfil his
desiring to be useful to me.
availed himself of my permission
to Lady Kilbarry, by leading
high and mighty dowager. She
from head to foot, while Copple
her, in a low, but audible tone
person perfectly *comme il faut*,
her scrutiny with unshaken
ladyship bowed with stately
while I made a very careless ac-
ceptible inclination of my bow
me whether I proposed making
Bath? To which I replied,
it very doubtful whether I
there a week.

for a young man of fashion. I can quite enter into your sentiments ; it 's a great change to me, I can assure you, to be living here ; when poor Lord Kilbarry was alive, we had our house in town, and moved in the first society."

"I have not the least idea," rejoined I, "of any of the people here. I never met any of them in town."

"In town !" repeated Lady Kilbarry, contemptuously ; "I should hope not indeed ! Did your eyes ever behold such a horrid mixture as there is here to-night ? If I was to be killed for it, I could not say of a dozen people in the room, who, and what they are."

"Does this comprise all the beauty and fashion of Bawth ?" inquired I, examining the crowd through a spyglass, which I carried fixed in the corner of my right eye.

Her ladyship, who, it seemed, never suffered her dignity to be relaxed by a smile, replied, with a sort of disdainful gravity, that such was indeed the fact.

"This is no place, as you may perceive,

live in society, so that you are
obliged to take up my abode
in self-defence."

I accepted the apology, which
thus made, for being found in
suitable to her rank in life, with

"But," she resumed, "I really
be obliged to quit it at last;
have no idea how to behave
certain standing; and one is the
sequence of their ignorance,
and unpleasantnesses, and —
nesses, which is extremely dis-
up with. Why, it was only I
niece and *myself* were absolute
at the public ball in these very

"No, really!" said I, while

“ Upon my life it’s true,” said Lady Kilbarry with considerable energy, and a great agitation of her jewelled head. “ I can assure you, I thought at one time that I should have been actually knocked down. I will tell you exactly how it was. I was sitting on the bench appropriated to women of quality, accompanied by my niece, Miss O’Farrel, daughter of a brother of my lamented husband, the late Lord Kilbarry, when up walks an individual — I am grieved and ashamed to say, for the credit of my rank and sex—a woman of title. Well, sir, — what I tell you can be proved by fifty witnesses, — she immediately flies at my niece, Miss O’Farrel, in the most vi’lent and unlady-like manner, for occupying a place on the peeress’s seat. I remonstrated very mildly on this extraordinary conduct ; upon which she abused me like a fishwoman, calling me all sorts of names, and attempted to drag Miss O’Farrel by main force from the seat. You may conceive, Mr. Fitz-Wiggins, what an effect this had upon my nerves,” (here she applied a smelling-bottle to her nose,) “ and

1. *Chlorophyll a* (Chl *a*)
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 3. *Chlorophyll c* (Chl *c*)
 4. *Chlorophyll d* (Chl *d*)
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 131. *Chlorophyll azaa* (Chl *aza*)
 132. *Chlorophyll abz* (Chl *abz*)
 133.

"Oh! you may well ask Lady Kilbarrig; "I believe of vinctal Irish males, who took Hambleton; what he was a with his regiment in Paddy's the Irish, you know, are dread can I hardly tell any late man herry. etc. etc."

Lady Kilbarry would willingly have dilated on a subject so agreeable as the demerits of her rival ; but somebody coming up interrupted the conversation. As I was turning away, her ladyship put a card of invitation into my hand, and hoped to have the pleasure of seeing me on the evening therein specified.

CHAPTER X

I WAS afterwards presented (very graciously by, my Lady Je fashionables ; and towards the evening, I made up my mind to rille, an accomplishment which when in the service of Lord I that I might not at once prove fortune-hunter, I selected for my one of the pretty, but portion of Mrs. Blades. Had I felt an in standing up for the time with I should soon have been relieved the vivacity of my charming partner far f

soft words, very fairly challenged me to institute a flirtation with her. This I was nothing loth to enter into, as an agreeable prelude to the more business-like design in which I hoped shortly to be employed. I withdrew, therefore, under the guidance of my fair friend, into an adjacent and smaller apartment, where there were some forsaken card-tables, and two or three couples, so intently occupied with each other, that for a moment I hesitated on the threshold, lest our intrusion should be a disturbance to parties, who appeared to me to be in the very article of a matrimonial engagement. But my companion had no such scruples, and, conducting me to a vacant bench, we took our seats, and, in a few minutes, I found myself in as deep a flirtation, (for it turned out to be nothing more serious,) as my neighbours.

After half an hour had passed in this agreeable trifling, we were summoned to supper, at the announcement of which the young ladies and gentlemen simultaneously started up, and pressed into the crowd, which was already mov-

and delighting the eye with t
tial beauties of two long ta
covered with good hair, whic
of the delicacies of the season
of merriment prevailed at this
fected by the gaiety of the soc
half a bottle of champagne, wh
lowed, I forgot that I was an ex
utterance to various sallies, no
with the character. The othe
champagne bottle, which quic
better half, had well nigh put
career of gentility at the outse
oblivious of the quality of the co
I was sitting, insomuch that I
relia Blades, to her great am
— — —

lating very confidentially, to a turbaned Turk, who sat next me, anecdotes of "one of my gentlemen" — Mr. Davison to wit, "the first gentleman I ever served," as I must needs further inform him. I was awakened to a sense of my indiscretion by the stares of the Turk, who with ineffable simplicity begged that I would explain, *as he did not understand the sell*; upon which I laughed very heartily, and with admirable promptitude replied, that there was *no sell* in the case; but the fact was, that having lately figured at a fancy ball in town, as a valet de chambre, I had, in a moment of absence, conceived that I was still enacting the same character. I appeased the fair Aurelia by the same fiction, who, however, received it rather coldly, until I added that I had said the same thing, on the same occasion, to a certain maid of honour, who, I assured her, I thought would almost have died with laughing. This opportune embellishment immediately converted my pretty partner's half resentment into perfect good-humour, and she not only emulated the maid of honour's merriment, but took care

many admiring eyes were turned to me as "a young gentleman of about town." Thus did I escape from what might otherwise have been an awkward scrape. Having now retired, I thought it would be a good time to retire for the evening. At the supper-table, therefore, I left the room with nearly a score of cards in my pocket.

I was followed by a party of whom I coolly inquired if there was any gaming-house, or any place, where I could kill an hour passively," said I, consulting my French watch, which had been given me by Lord Vane.

“correct” places of resort, which it was agreed we should visit in succession.

We repaired first to a gaming-house, and on our way, I edified these youths with some curious varieties of slang, which my poor friend O'Dienne had put me up to, and to which they listened with the deference of true disciples. One of them, by way perhaps of letting me see that they had an idea of the fast thing, proposed that we should draw some bell-wires, and detach a few knockers, as we passed along ; and suggested to me as a very brilliant idea at a more advanced stage of the night, to effect an exchange of sign-boards ; as, for instance, to remove the three golden balls at some suburban pawnbroker's, and fix them over the handsomest silversmith's shop in the city ; or to transfer some hedge-barber's pole to the porch of the smartest friseur in Milsom Street. But I set my face decidedly against all such exploits, as an unworthy waste of time and talent, and moreover involving the necessity of bodily exertion and peril, which I abhorred. This opposition put a stop to enterprises in

which I was not at all ambitious to distinguish myself; and the next minute we entered the "hell," which was within a few doors of my cousin Smallcomb's house. The room was pretty full, and in the middle was a French hazard-table, where about a dozen persons were deeply engaged in the worship of the blind goddess.

Gaming had never been one of those evil propensities which I had found it difficult to resist. I did not like losing money, and I preferred surer modes of making it. But the effects of the champagne had not yet evaporated.

box, and, flushed with success, in addition to the incitement which I have before alluded to, I put down a heavy stake, which I won at the first throw. I nicked my main four times, and afterwards threw six mains.

My winnings now exceeded two hundred pounds; idle spectators gathered closer to the table with an appearance of considerable interest, and the visages of the bankers began to assume an ominous length. I maintained the composure of my countenance, but I could not quite preserve the steadiness of my hand. I persevered, and the result was, that when the box came round to me again, I had another brilliant hand, and the bank reluctantly declined to set me any longer. I acquiesced with great *sang-froid*, and grumbling at the mass of paper with which I was obliged to encumber myself, thrust the notes, uncounted, into my pocket. Then turning to the young men who had accompanied me to the gaming-house, and who had witnessed with admiration both my extraordinary success, and the scarcely less extraordinary equa-

So saying, I refreshed myself with
sherry and soda-water from a si-
wishing the crest-fallen adventures
ing, walked out of the house, at
same companions with whom I had
I received from them many con-
my success and spirit, of which
me such instances were rare in
ed, of course, to make light of
that I seldom played, and, what
a higher stake than was neces-
interest enough in the game to

On entering the bar-room
Whistle, by which polite design
Finish was known among
I found a very miscellaneous
myself as a member of the club

only was I encountered by many stares and scrutinizing glances, but I overheard fragments of conversation which had obvious reference to my achievement. Quite unconcerned at the sensation which I caused, I seated myself, kindled my cigar, and called for my glass of brandy and water, after the fashion of the place; in conformity with which, likewise, I either took a part in the general conversation, or chatted promiscuously with anybody in the room. Many persons talked to me about my late achievement, and especially a tall, elderly, respectable-looking man, with a grave, and somewhat sanctimonious countenance, such an one as might have been taken for a Methodist preacher, or a knave of the highest class: he neither smoked, nor drank anything but a little weak sherry and water; never entering into, nor seeming at all diverted by, the ribaldry which was passing around. This gentleman, whom I recollected to have seen at the hazard-table, seemed to take a deeper interest in me, on account of my performance, than the mere vague admiration which it had excited in the rest.

I had called) was my favourite m

"I have sometimes," said he
a very measured tone, "even suc
with a seven, but never with any
on the dice. You play a good
likely?"

I replied in the negative, but
the nine was my usual main. I
handled a dice-box but twice
by, and then only for silver stakes

"Indeed!" said my sallow friend
appearance of slight surprise: "I
thought, from your style of cast
had been an experienced hand,--
part, I know very little about the

Here he was interrupted by a
the other said and then

. . . .

long book, with a calf-skin binding and silver clasp, from his pocket, after consulting which, he informed the interrogator that he could accommodate him *in ponies*, if that would suit him. An affirmative answer was given, upon which Mr. Tuchet having made a memorandum in his betting-book, restored it to his pocket, turned again to me, and inquired whether I meant to make any stay in Bath? and having learned that I might, perhaps, remain there a few weeks, offered to do himself the pleasure of calling upon me, and said that Mrs. Tuchet would be happy to send me a card for her ball on the 18th instant. I bowed, of course, in acquiescence, and Mr. T. finishing his glass of sherry and water, took his hat and great coat, and walked out of the house. When he was gone, I asked one of my acquaintance, who he was? "That," said my informant, "would, I believe, be a difficult question to answer; and, if report be true, more than he could tell you himself. He is an instance, sir, of a person who has risen in the world by his own merits. His origin is in fact bu-

years he was a miscellaneous swindler, among other things, a There are many, however, who know him as an active partner in a at the West-end. A few years ago he was up here as a man of fortune, of good family, and is now one of the people in the place. He is a public amusement, instigator, treasurer of fancy fêtes, club his means are, nobody can tell but it is supposed he makes money by betting on the turf, of information which is to be love nor money. However, charitable person, "far be it from me

CHAPTER XI.

THIS is all that I can relate from personal recollection of what passed on that memorable evening. Of what followed, I have only been able to gather confused and contradictory accounts, which it is not worth while to lay before the reader. Suffice it to say, that I awoke at noon next day, with a quick wiry pulse, and a burning headache. Thus I lay for some minutes, far gone in disgust with all things sublunary, when a flash coming across my mind, I started up, seized my pantaloons, and with breathless haste, thrust my hands into both pockets of that garment. A bunch of dirty paper which I grasped, at once relieved my mind, and convinced me that the wild reminiscence which suggested this movement, was not the impression of a dream, but a veritable

... of that which my now rusty-
memory testified to have been my wit
discovery gave me a great deal of
while I was still in great tribula-
mind and body, my cousin Smaller
the room, and seeing me seated in
gown, on the foot of the bed, w
leaning on my hand, the picture a
pile of bank-notes before me, star
prise, and by his looks seemed, as w
to ask explanation of a sight so pec

"Oh, Smallicombe," said I, in a w
audible, "I am very ill; I have
and robbed."

"I perceive you are seedy," an
but with a glance at the notes,
easily make out the other."

-I am

of astonishment and exultation ; and betrayed great concern when I informed him that I missed the greater part of my gains. For my consolation, however, he endeavoured to persuade me, that I must be mistaken in my estimate ; for, being inebriated at the time, I could not possibly say what I had won ; but when I was positive as to the fact of my having received upwards of four hundred pounds, referring to several persons who could corroborate my assertion, he immediately fell into my first notion, and admitted that I must have been robbed. That this should have happened, he said, was not only highly probable, but, indeed, almost inevitable, considering that every black-guard in Bath knew that I had a large sum in my possession, and that I was under the influence of wine.

“ Perhaps,” said he, “ the fellows of whom you won the money have had you dogged for the purpose of getting it back. I should say nothing more likely. Have you no idea where you went, after you left the Pig and Whistle ?”

I admitted that I could say nothing definite

On : I see it all, said one
thing can be clearer; you have
and plundered."

In answer to an objection of
this hypothesis, that the thief
cleaned me out, my cousin thought
trary, that the circumstance of
ing left in my possession, was
warily they had gone to work
much as possible, to avoid suspic

"In short," said he, "these
ways in which you might have
the money, that it is a wonder
brought home so much as you
think you may consider yourself
fellow. Why, you were brought
clock this morning by a watch

apprehended, as he might have availed himself of something more than the card of address which he found in my pocket ; but this proceeding he scouted as utterly unprofitable. To every other measure that I proposed, for the purpose of regaining my property, Mr. Smallcombe strongly objected, representing such difficulties as were insuperable, and exhorting me to be thankful for what I had been permitted to retain. Upon consideration, I was fain to comply with his advice ; not, indeed, that I was convinced by any of his arguments, but the vehemence with which he urged his dissuasives, hinted to me a conjecture much nearer home. In plain language, I had not a very exalted opinion of my kinsman's probity ; and, therefore, I thought it extremely possible, that the balance of my winnings might be, at that time, deposited in no other place, than the said Smallcombe's strong box. For this private reason, I was content to let the subject drop ; since, of course, it would not suit my views to pursue any investigation in that quarter. My cousin then desired to hear the details of

... essayed in vain to compose myself
was my mind agitated by lament
loss,—indignation against my faithless
whom I grievously suspected—by
rious other modes of accounting
ter—and, lastly, by curses on the
The sight of the wealth which
to me afforded me but little comfort
a bereaved parent, I was much
to mourn for that which was irretrievable
to prize what I still possessed.

CHAPTER XII.

My cousin appeared to be, and no doubt was, sincerely delighted at the brilliant success of my *débat* in the fashionable circles of Bath, and could now rally me on the modest doubts which I had expressed, of my being able to get a footing in good society. He had now to caution me to maintain the golden mean, and not make myself too conspicuous, lest by becoming an object of too concentrated interest, inquiry should be provoked into my private history, a scrutiny which it might be difficult to baffle. He prudently counselled me, therefore, to put a curb upon my ambition, and not pretend to more than was necessary for my purpose. He said that he had already heard me canvassed, and some ill-natured surmises started respecting me. None of these,

advised me to be upon my guard
warning in good part, for the
doubt that it was worth be-
Nay, I gave it very mature con-
sideration and came to the determination to
fopery which I had affected;
a claim to more solid qualities
I had, as yet, discovered. At
occasion of a dinner-party, to
be invited, and fortune favoured
me so far as to place me
near a young lady, who, preferring to
pass part of her time in the im-
provement of her mind, instead of the adornment
of her person, was stigmatized as a *blue* by
the sex, and, likewise, by a gentleman
who was present.

I must confess, however, that I here found myself to have ventured somewhat beyond my depth, and often wished before dinner was over that I had not been so rash as to encounter a person who was equally well read and well bred, and possessed of that intimate penetration, which is usually found in people of sense, who have lived a good deal in the world.

Although nothing could be more easy than this young lady's manner, it put a constraint upon mine which I had not before experienced ; and though her conversation was far from being obtrusive, yet it contained assumptions and allusions which were as unintelligible to me as if she had spoken in a foreign tongue. Hence I blushed, stammered, made broken malapropos replies, and at last, upon my saying something, I suppose very wide of the mark, which caused her to give me a slight stare, I was fairly seized with panic, and abruptly turning to my neighbour on the other side, the silly mother of six silly daughters, I addressed myself to her, until the ladies retired. This little reverse was

After dinner, I had a most
play. I found myself next to
blue young lady, a general officer
who, in accents almost inarticulate
absence of teeth, mumbled forth
of his achievements. Forty years
told, he had been a gallant, gallant
that his fame was recorded
of Doctors' Commons. Besides
been the hero in several other
by fathers for loss of services,
killed a lieutenant in the navy,
challenged him for trifling with
his sister. Sir Frederick, who
called a jolly fellow, accompanied
interesting details with copious
was so charmed at finding in
himself a most agreeable companion

introducing me to his daughter. In vain did I assure him that I had already received that honour ; he was as deaf as a post, and the small portion of understanding which he possessed was now muddled by his after-dinner indulgence. He persisted, therefore, in dragging me up to Miss Beaufoy, and presented me with an absurd rhapsody, composed of praise of me, and flattery of his daughter's charms ; for it would seem that the mechanical *jejune* gallantry, in which he always addressed the younger portion of the fair sex, could not be laid aside, especially after dinner, when speaking to his own child. My sense of the awkwardness of my own situation was heightened by my sympathy for that of the young lady, who reddened with shame and vexation at the exposure which her father had made of himself, and her, before—I fear I must write the word—a vulgar stranger—for such I could not help feeling by a painful instinct that she considered me. Nobody, however, could have behaved with more self-possession than she did ; and being myself anxious to prove that I was not

lowed with respectful gravity,
myself from Sir Frederick, with
part of the room. I have re-
that Miss Beaufoy appreciated
my conduct, for she ever acted
with kindness, although her re-
served that indescribable some-
fectually resisted any approach

CHAPTER XIII.

My introduction into the best society at Bath being now completed, I began to take into most serious consideration the main object of the adventure, since my present position was one of that precarious sort which does not admit of trifling with time: I came to the determination, therefore, of fixing my regards upon Miss Jemima Jellico, a young lady who, if not the richest prize to be gained, had the merit of being one of the surest; for I was credibly informed that her father had repeatedly signified his intention to pay twenty thousand pounds down to each of his daughters' husbands on their wedding-days, and was known to be able to perform his promise. I pitched upon Miss Jemima in preference to either of her sisters, because she was the plainest, and, therefore,

I thought the least likely to be solicited, while the others were still unmarried. I had, however, no such easy enterprise to undertake, for the Jellicos were decidedly aristocratic in their tastes, and had a notorious predilection for nobility, and the appurtenances thereto. There were then a younger son of an Irish peer, and the heir to a baronetcy, laying close siege to Miss Jellico and her sister Miss Anna Maria, and as these gentlemen were fortunate enough to have the advantage of precedence over their rivals, it was supposed that they must be respectively the successful competitors, provided no peer or baronet in possession started before the end of the season. Miss Jemima had likewise her suitors, but they were happily untitled, and the personal recommendation of none of them were such as to bid me despair.

At this aristocratic house, I was obliged, in self-defence, to wear my most superfine airs, otherwise, my Lady Jellico and her daughters would have doubted whether I were a "real fashionable." As it was, they verily believed

that I was the pink of gentility. My coats were, if possible, *too well* made, and I shone pre-eminent in waistcoats and gold chains; my person reeked with perfume, and my hair was becurled and bedizened in a most imposing manner. I talked incessantly of lords and ladies, and was familiarly acquainted with the most distinguished and exclusive resorts of *bon ton*. Nay, (knowing my customers,) I did not stop short at insinuating that I was connected by relationship with several noble families.

Let not the reader suppose that my effrontery and temerity exceeded all bounds. I numbered more than one valet and gentlewoman among my London acquaintance who had distinguished themselves in the literary world as novelists of fashionable life, and I knew that their representations were received with implicit faith in the suburbs and provinces. My means of information on this subject were equal to theirs, and though I might not possess the talent to write, yet surely there was no reason why I should not *talk*

Lady Jellico's house were, for of this description, although scented nearly as much as I did half my information, and in without any information was no apprehension, either from noble stock, or the baronet in the former had never quitted until he had joined his regiment from which he had joined as to the other youth of gent been reared in a stable, talked pounded of oaths and slang, & antipathy to everybody and savoured of decent society.

But the Misses Jellico are

and thin as a thread paper, they pronounced "an elegant young man;" and in Mr. Ludgrove's boisterous ribaldry, they discovered "a fund of drollery and humour." As for the humble individual who endites these pages, he was *par excellence* "a man of the first fashion, very agreeable, but very *fine*;" the Fitz-Wiggins," so Miss Anna Maria was wont to designate me. Miss Jemima, being, as I have said, inferior to her sisters in personal attractions, had turned her thoughts towards the culture of her mind. I cannot, indeed, say that her success was very brilliant, but this, perhaps, was owing to the poverty of the soil and to no fault of hers. She must in her own opinion, however, have made considerable progress, having learning enough to entertain a sovereign contempt for the understandings of her father, mother, and sisters. She affected to mix little in company, despising it as far below her standard both of fashion and intelligence. Shortly before I had become acquainted with her, she had struck up a violent friendship with a certain little widow, who had once

been a celebrated toast, but falling into the wane of her charms, and finding herself neglected by mankind, had withdrawn from the vanities of the world, and established a literary coterie, to which she sedulously endeavoured to make converts among young ladies and gentlemen. This lady, whose name was Fanshawe, made a great parade of accomplishment. She spoke French and Italian, but more particularly affected German, which she delighted in teaching her fair pupils; as if she wished to spoil their sweet voices and delicate

broken off two or three engagements, and thwarted several affairs which, until her interference, had promised to arrive at an auspicious consummation.

No sooner, therefore, had I obtained, as I thought, some influence with Miss Jemima, than I tried to detach her from an alliance so unfavourable to my interests ; but I nearly ruined myself in the rash attempt. The young lady fired up at what she was pleased to call an attack upon her most valued friend, and drawing herself up, called upon me to explain my meaning. I hastened to repair my error, by denying with great fervour that I had one word to say against Mrs. Fanshawe, whom I myself thought a very charming woman ; but the world said that she was a person not to be depended upon, and consequently zeal for her, (Miss J.) had led me to throw out a word of warning, which I felt satisfied was needless.

“ The world, indeed ! ” quoth Miss Jemima with a magnificent curl of her lip, and a wave of the hand that might have suited a tragedy

queen; "they must be people of very little minds who care what the world says or thinks," which she pronounced with a most contemptuous emphasis. In this sentiment I of course concurred; and fearing that she would repeat what I had said to the widow, and thus make her my mortal enemy, I launched out into extravagant praises of that lady, extolled her person, talents, and manners; her French, Italian, and German; her music and drawing, &c. and wound up by declaring that with *one* exception she was the most captivating woman I had ever

next care was to cultivate the good graces of the latter. To conceal from her my design upon her *protégée* would, I knew, be useless, so I took the bold measure of avowing it to her, and soliciting her interest in my behalf. She was evidently surprised at my candour or presumption, and with a dangerous smile promised to me any little influence which she might possess in aid of my design. I perceived her treachery, and was for a moment disposed to relinquish the undertaking in despair, but recollecting that no object in life was to be gained without perseverance and hazard, I determined not to be beaten by a faint heart. True, I had to deal with a veteran coquette, but I knew not any good reason why the same devotion and flattery which had prevailed with others of the sex no less shrewd and experienced, should be thrown away upon her. At all events I would try, and who should say that I might not in the end make a conquest of the widow herself? Thus I should be arming cupid's bow with a double string. *Cæteris paribus*, it was a matter of indifference to me whether my la-

bours were ultimately rewarded by the maid or the widow, for, by aid of the assurance offices, a jointure of fifteen hundred pounds per annum is nearly as good as a fortune of twenty thousand pounds.

CHAPTER XIV.

MRS. FANSHAW, though she did not mingle in the current of Bath society, opened her house more frequently perhaps than any other person in the place. She called her parties *conversaziones*, to which she invited any and everybody, who was extraordinary or remarkable, in any way whatever. The result was, that these assemblies were of a very heterogeneous character, which procured for her house the sobriquet of "Exeter 'Change." Here you might see a celebrated pulpit orator jostled by a Roman Catholic bishop; a poet and a critic—hateful collision!—jammed together in the doorway; and a pert pretty miss staring a grave turbaned Mussulman out of countenance. Actors, artists, musicians, and "talented" people of all sorts found admittance here. These *omnium ga-*

idea in common with yourself, stood the same language. I ever, were held upon all subjects abstruse philosophy down to the I felt no diffidence about taking debates, for I knew enough to many of the most solemn and fierce, pretenders as shallow as I firmly and confidently on all were brought on the tapis in me was not much surprised to find dered, in this circle, as a young extraordinary abilities. Notwithstanding success, I should have found the position absolutely intolerable, had for the object I had in view & mya

selves eschewed the vanities of the *beau monde*. My time was consequently occupied in a continued routine of amusement. A portion of my morning was generally passed at Mrs. Fanshawe's, where I was one of the very few visitors who were admitted at that hour. Then I had usually a dinner engagement, after which followed two or three evening parties.

After due probation, I arrived at the pinnacle of society, by an introduction to the *sanctum sanctorum* of Bath exclusivism. I received a card of invitation from the Reverend Mr. Ackerly, a sinecure parson, who opened his house twice a week to a select few, among whom it would seem not even rank was admitted as a matter of course ; for it was said, but I will not vouch for the truth of it, that the reverend gentleman, on one occasion, refused an application in behalf of a peer, whose character and manners were exceptionable. Be that as it may, the ambition of every aspirant at Bath pointed to Mr. Ackerly's *soirées* as the summit of his hopes.

Having always understood that exclusivism was the device of dullards and fools to procure

an importance which they were unable to gain in general society, I did not expect, as a greenhorn might have done, that Mr. Ackerly's parties were the quintessence of refinement and intelligence. I experienced no disappointment, consequently, when I entered a spacious but sombre drawing-room, where some half-dozen card-tables were occupied by players so grave and silent that they seemed to be performing a penance instead of enjoying an amusement, while a few others not so engaged, were endeavouring to sustain the semblance of conver-

speaking. I was then at leisure to make the observations above recorded, and to indulge in any further speculations that might occur, for after having exchanged greetings, and a few indifferent words with the two or three acquaintances whom I recognized, I was left to myself; Mr. Ackerly, indeed, invited me to join the card-players, but this pleasure being declined, he made no farther effort towards my entertainment.

People who aim at fashionable distinction must, it is well known, endure much long-suffering, and practise a great deal of self-denial. This consideration could hardly prevent me from dropping asleep at Mr. Ackerly's *soirée*; for the fatigue of four nights successive dissipation, aided perhaps by the low somniferous buzz and comparative darkness of the room, began to operate; and at intervals I fell into a gentle doze, which I fear might have ended in profound slumber, had I not happily been aroused by the sound of animated voices at the adjacent card-table. I started up, gazed

had arisen, and stepped forward
it was about. The disputant
ladies, one of whom it seems
partner of losing the game by
imputation on her science and
dowager, who repelled the
asperity. Hence a retort, and
rejoinder; then abandoning all
attention, they attacked each other
sarcasm, in which there was
rility than wit. The aggressor
to some contemptuous allusion
birth and breeding, which the
a still more severe insinuation
character of the other beldams,
cular hints, which, though not
referred. I suppose, to some in

glance of humorous significance at me, who stood over against him. For my part, I began to entertain serious apprehensions of a breach of the peace, and looked round the room to see if the same concern was visible in the countenances of others; but though many bestowed a look or a smile on these proceedings, they did not seem to regard them as though they were of unusual occurrence. Mr. Ackerly, however, came forward, and did not hesitate to remonstrate with the dowagers in pretty sharp terms upon the impropriety of their conduct. They heard his reproof not without some marks of shame, and each endeavoured to excuse herself, by throwing upon the other the blame of the first aggression. This adjustment would have ended in a renewal of hostilities, had they not been prevented by Mr. Ackerly, whose authority seemed to be respected by both parties.

Peace being thus restored, the game was resumed, and concluded without any farther verbal communication passing between these belligerent allies, each lady bridling and purs-

ing up her mouth, as if to hinder, per force, the egress of a word. This little incident over, I took my leave, lest in the absence of any further enlivening circumstance, I should relapse into somnolency.

CHAPTER XV.

I CONTINUED firm to my resolution not to try my fortune a second time at the hazard-table, being satisfied with the *éclat* which I had gained by a victory over the adventurers, and unwilling to afford them an opportunity of retrieving their losses. Mr. Tuchet frequently tried to tempt me into the Pandemonium; but a hint had been dropped to me that he was suspected to be interested in the concern, which, coupled with the sketch of this gentleman's character with which I had been already favoured, was sufficient to put me on my guard against any designs. In vain, therefore, did he invite me to dinner, with the view, as I was credibly informed, of afterwards fleecing me at play. I accepted his invitation, and met five or six gentlemen whom I had not been

accustomed to see in places of general resort; their appearance was peculiar, and whether it was a fact, or the illusion of my own fancy predisposed to such conjectures, but I could not help thinking they looked very much like a company of sharpers. They paid me great attention, each challenging me during dinner to drink champagne, and afterwards encouraging me, both by precept and example, to do justice to our host's excellent claret. I drank as freely as they could desire, while they entertained me with discussions upon horses, hunt-

out my watch, made an exclamation at the lateness of the hour, and protested that I must hurry away to my evening engagements. Before they had time to make any remonstrance against this unexpected retreat, I had wished them a general good evening, and hastened out of the house, leaving these worthy confederates, for such they probably were, staring with scarcely concealed surprise and disappointment at losing their prey just as he seemed to be safely enclosed within their toils. My suspicions were corroborated by the subsequent conduct of Tuchet, who from that day forth dropped my acquaintance, exchanging only a slight bow when we met.

When I had made my footing pretty sure at Bath, I found my connexion with Smallcombe become exceedingly irksome. The business of the bank-notes abstracted from my pocket, had renewed the dislike which I formerly entertained towards that individual, with increased vigour. My disgust was increased almost to overflow by his odious familiarity, the vigilance with which he watched all

my proceedings, and the identity of interest which he incessantly claimed. He expected a daily account of all that I had seen and done, tormenting me with the unceasing inquiry, "How d'ye get on?" in allusion to my affair with Miss Jellico, and even thrusting his advice upon me, sometimes almost in the shape of instruction, as to the conduct of the said affair. He took no hint from my reserve, coldness, and evasion, which, when very palpable, he would notice, by reminding me coarsely that I was in his power, and that it was

with every circumstance of derision and ignominy, I was half resolved to make a timely and prudent retreat. But these squeamish and pusillanimous moods were never sufficiently permanent to prevail, and when Smallcombe saw me under their influence, he tried to cheer and urge me forward, and atone for his insolence by flattery and solemn promises never to molest me subsequently to the event upon which our contract depended, my part of the said contract having been first duly performed.

To place my faith in such a person was impossible, the only mode of securing him was by his own interest, to bind which more effectually to silence, I gave him my promise in writing, after my marriage with Miss Jemima Jellico, or any other lady in Bath, to pay him an annual sum of fifty pounds so long as he preserved his relationship, and the history of his connexion with me, a profound secret. This he gladly accepted, and I now hoped that I had taken the best precautions against discovery. My chief apprehension was that Smallcombe might betray me in a fit of drunken-

ness, to which he was now becoming more and more addicted ; but his avarice was increasing in the same proportion with his intemperance, and I trusted that the one would counteract the other. As to my nearer relations, I hoped that their regard for my welfare would be a sufficient inducement to them to abstain from laying any claim to my affections or countenance ; but should they prove impracticable, my intention was to take my wife abroad, and fix my residence, at least for a few years, in some place where my former history should be

CHAPTER XVI.

ALTHOUGH my time passed at Bath very agreeably, I was, for very obvious reasons, extremely desirous to come to a point with Miss Jellico at the earliest possible period. I had already ingratiated myself with the alderman and "my lady;" who, as I was credibly informed, voted me "a very genteel young man," and would, therefore, I hoped, consider me not altogether unworthy to aspire to the hand of Miss Jemima. Before I committed myself to the young lady, however, I deemed it expedient to sound the old gentleman upon the subject. I took an opportunity, therefore, of broaching the matter one evening when we were sitting together after dinner, for I was often invited to join their family party. I signified to him my admira-

tion of his daughter, and that I should be the happiest of mankind if my partiality met with his approbation ; and, that there should be no misunderstanding about terms, I laid aside false delicacy, and alluded to them in language sufficiently explicit.

“ You are probably aware, sir,” said I, with a shrug and a smile of pretended humility, “ that I have no riches to lay at your daughter’s feet ; I am but a very poor gentleman with a long pedigree, which I heartily wish I could exchange for a long rent-roll. Hang

collect—of course—Sir John Fitz-Wiggins—yes, yes, a very great man.”

“Ay,” resumed I, “there was the thing, you see ; if he hadn’t been a man of such note, he might have been let alone, but they wanted to make an example in his county ; for my part, I wish he had kept to his horses and hounds, and let old Charley fight his own battles. Then by way of mending the matter, his grandson, my great, great, great-grandfather, must be on the wrong side again at the Revolution, the confounded old Tory.”

“Don’t abuse him for being a Tory, Mr. Fitz-Wiggins ; I honour him for it, sir ; I’m a Tory myself,” (striking his little, fat fist upon the table,) “and will always stand up for my King : here ’s his Majesty’s health ; God bless him.” So saying he swallowed a bumper, and invited me to pledge him. I did so, disclaiming at the same time any ill-will to royalty, although I had suffered so deeply from the cause. I then led the conversation back to the main point, respecting which I gave Sir Joseph to understand that I paused for a reply.

The little citizen was a good deal flattered at being thus pressed ; swallowed hastily a glass of wine, and took several rapid pinches of snuff, before he replied. — I was somewhat chagrined at appearances which seemed to denote surprise and embarrassment ; for I had hoped that the old people had already contemplated my addresses, and were prepared to give them a favourable reception ; but, to my active fancy, this hesitation seemed to imply that they, — or, rather, Lady Jellico, for the reverse of the Salic law obtained in this family, —

ever sentiments she thought proper. I abstained, therefore, from saying another word about the matter, intending to lose no time in laying my addresses before her ladyship, who might take umbrage at my having omitted to consult her pleasure in the first instance.

I waited upon her next day for this purpose, and was received by the old lady with a stiffness which did not tend to dissipate my unfavourable forebodings. I kept my courage up, however, and announced to her with perfect self-possession, that I wished to communicate with her upon a concern in which my happiness was deeply involved.

“I have understood from Sir Joseph, sir,” said she, without any relaxation of stateliness, and scarcely opening her mouth sufficiently to let the words escape, “that you wished to say something of proposals of marriage, respecting of *my* daughter Jemima.”

“You are rightly informed, madam,” I replied; “I threw out a hint to Sir Joseph yesterday on the subject, meaning to enter into more full particulars with your ladyship,

as you would, of course, be the best judge of what would conduce to your daughter's happiness. I trust, Lady Jellico, I may flatter myself that you will not consider me altogether unworthy of the honour to which I aspire."

"That, Mr. Fitz-Wiggins, must depend upon circumstances. In the first place, it is my duty to inquire what is the nature of your fortune?" With these words, she drew up her head, half closed her eyes, and pursed up her mouth with the utmost rigidity.

This interrogatory was a poser for which I

freely admit that I have nothing to boast of but birth, family, and fashion. In point of fortune, unhappily, I am conscious I cannot pretend to the hand of Miss Jellico, my claims in that respect being so trivial, that they may be almost said to amount to nothing — certainly not worth naming to Lady Jellico ; but I trust this will not be considered an insuperable objection ; and that my ardent wish to devote myself to your daughter's happiness, together with any other recommendations which I may be supposed to possess, will be allowed to have their due weight in influencing your decision."

Lady Jellico, upon whom this speech did not fail to make an impression, complimented me on my straightforward conduct, which she condescended to say prepossessed her in my favour.

" For my part," said she, " I consider that a gentleman is a gentleman if he's in rags. But people now-a-days are all for money, and certainly I do wish you were not quite so bad off in that matter. However, as I said afore, I have a great *pongshong* for blood, and that's

and connections ever w
moved in a very gente
has often had a matter
and honourables, and me
at his table at once, and
I used to spend a great d
was married to a noblema
I was brought up, as one
som of the aristocracy. A
marchant, I don't deny tha
be united to real gentlemen
suppose you know, is paid g
Mr. Ludgrove, Sir John Lu
and I suppose that will em
Anna Maria, she's very so
Honourable Mrs. Cornelius
settled that . . .

original as my own; her father having been, by all accounts, an apothecary and influential member of the corporation in an electioneering borough, where, as mayor, he no doubt entertained the patrons and members for the said borough, which belonged to a titled family. And as to her uncle, who was wedded to a nobleman's daughter, it seemed such was indeed the fact, he having gained the young lady's affections when her father's valet, and eloped with her from his lordship's house. This by the by.

I spared no endeavour to determine Lady Jellico's doubts in my favour, and at length succeeded in wringing from her a reluctant permission to pay my addresses to her daughter. I could pretty plainly divine what was passing in the good lady's mind. She was willing to accept me as a *dernier resort*, but wished to give Time every chance of producing a more eligible suitor. But I had a wholesome apprehension of Time, and did not care to trust my fortunes to his tender mercies. Satisfied, however, that the qualified consent which I had

obtained was a sufficient security to proceed upon, I was resolved to follow up my attack upon the parents by an immediate explanation with the young lady upon whose heart I flattered myself I had made a considerable impression through the medium of her understanding, for I had not ventured to follow the ordinary laws of love in laying siege to this intellectual maid. I had essayed no frivolous flirtation, but had sought to recommend myself to her by a superiority in argument; as the tender affections of the Amazonian fair were to be captivated only

CHAPTER XVII.

How short-sighted are human speculations! how liable to be frustrated by some little accident which the calculator had never contemplated! Such was the case on the present occasion. Just as I was approaching with sanguine hope the consummation of that event which would at once have terminated my adventures, one of these perverse and unlooked-for accidents dashed down the cup of bliss when I was, as it were, in the very act of raising it to my lips. To quit metaphor: in calling at Sir Joseph Jellico's the next day, for the purpose of formally communicating my passion to the fair object, I found the house in great confusion, and on inquiring the cause, was informed by the distracted footman, "that neither Sir Joseph nor my lady could see me, as his

master had gone off about an hour ago, in a —
chaise and four, and her ladyship was in her —
bed-room almost out of her mind, in conse-
quence of Miss Jemima having *started* with a
musicianer."

Such was the account which the man in his
confusion blurted out, and, upon farther in-
quiry, I was informed that the young lady had
eloped with a soft, sentimental youth, an inci-
pient professional vocalist, one of the "talented"
guests and particular *protégées* of Mrs. Fan-
shawe! I hastened to that lady's residence,
and there obtained a confirmation of this un-

pitions, because I was aware that many young ladies of fashion were accustomed to make very free with their professional instructors, who, in consequence, conducted themselves towards their pupils with a familiarity which, in the absence of such encouragement, would have been considered extremely out of place.

If Mrs. Fanshawe really meant mischief in forwarding this intimacy, I was unwilling to ascribe to her any worse motive than a passion for petty intrigue, or any design so serious as the event which had taken place. Miss Jellico's personal and mental accomplishments were not such as to excite Mrs. Fanshawe's jealousy, therefore she had no visible inducement to betray her young friend into ridicule, and perhaps ultimate ruin. It never occurred to me then to suspect that the widow could be jealous of the attentions which I paid to Miss Jellico; since, having very soon satisfied myself that my original idea, of leading her for the third time to the altar of Hymen, was impracticable, instead of dividing my devotions between her and her

uncharitable conclusion from

With reference to this unfavourable
I shall only add that Sir John
up with his daughter until
Mrs. Henry Lilywhite. La-
at this *mésalliance* was im-
mediately refused either to see
communication with her child, w-
as having disgraced herself.
knight, though he dared not
the penitent fair, yet soon ex-
ness to her and her husband
gave them as much succour as
to afford without being disco-

Mrs. Lilywhite, on her return
"her dearest, her only friend

station, it was impossible that their intimacy should continue. In vain did poor Mrs. Lilywhite remonstrate on the cruelty and injustice of this behaviour, and remind her friend that she had been the first to introduce her to her present husband, and had constantly thrown them together; Mrs. Fanshawe repelled the insinuation with infinite scorn. A scene of fierce recrimination ensued, and the ladies parted, never to meet again. Mrs. Lilywhite went about for some time, stating her hard case, wherever she could engage an audience, and the widow indulged in a great deal of contemptuous satire at the expense of the unfortunate Jemima. Such was the not very uncommon termination of the eternal friendships which are so sedulously cultivated by the gentler sex.

CHAPTER XVIII.

I did not escape some share of the ridicule and ill nature which were elicited by this untoward event—an unnecessary aggravation to the chagrin which my disappointment begot. The time lost in this unprofitable pursuit was irretrievable, the season being now far ad-

for my future board and lodging. Had I dared to provoke him, I would have given vent to my disgust, and openly charged him with the robbery, which I was more than ever persuaded he had practised upon me. But I suppressed my passion, and calmly replied, that as such was the case, I must seek for a lodging elsewhere, as I could not afford to accept the alternative, my stock being reduced to something below thirty pounds. He then began to reproach me with having thrown away opportunities and with losing my time ; but I could not forbear interrupting him, by observing, with a stern look, that “ he had no cause to complain of my disappointment : ” and here I checked myself, as I was proceeding to be more explicit. Smallcombe, though he turned pale, put on a frown, and asked me, in a forced tone of defiance “ what I meant ? ” but encountering another glance from me, turned it off with a laugh, and in a more conciliatory accent disclaimed any intention to complain. He knew, he said, that it was only a speculation, and that he must stand his chance either

no offence in that. I answered there was none, and signified change my quarters without further delay. My cousin made no attempt to do so, and I actually slept under another roof that night.

It would not do, of course, to show the least degree personally concerned in the matter of Miss Jemima Jell's departure from the public as usual, and carried on in my countenance and manner. I might be in my heart; I engaged in the gossip to which that event gave rise, some rather malicious allusion to the supposed disappointment with her former lover.

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME

sition. In this desperate state of my affairs, it was no time to relax in that excellent quality to which I mainly attributed my success—I mean confidence, or, in more blunt phraseology, Impudence. After a very short deliberation, therefore, I directed my hasty addresses to a lady, who, though not the most wealthy or charming, was recommended to me by the consideration that she would be the least likely to object to expeditious proceedings, as she was very well known to have been long since tired of “single blessedness,” and as she had arrived at that time of life when delays become every day more dangerous. This second object of my choice, was no other than the grim Terpsichore of Mrs. Blade’s fancy ball. Her name was Griffin—Delia Griffin; she had no one to control her will, her nearest relatives being nephews and nieces, who were fortunately at present in extremely bad odour with their aunt, from having imprudently ventured, this year, for the first time, to consider her as a confirmed old maid, whose fortune they were sure to inherit. The said fortune, according to the best infor-

bear in mind,) at which I v

It would have been a great deal of time and toil to conduct a kind with all the arts and *belle passion* usually prescribed. A more serious address was here required. My suit with such activity, and courtship of three weeks, won my affianced bride. The difficulty was to raise a sum through the preliminaries, until the celebration of the wedding. The agency forbade that I should go to my Delia for a loan, the possibility that she might be an exposure of the nakedness had already received a hint

ness-like form, as instructions to her lawyer for the settlement.

I was, I must confess, taken somewhat un-awares by this document: I had hoped that everything was to be left to my own disposal. I was egregiously mistaken; the lady proposed to secure to herself and her children, certain stocks, shares, and bonds, amounting in the aggregate to ten thousand two hundred and thirty-eight pounds some shillings and pence, allowing me only a benefit of survivorship in the yearly interest of five thousand odd pounds, three per cent consols. I suppose my surprise and mortification were depicted in my countenance during my silent perusal of these "instructions," for Miss Griffin rather sharply observed, that "*as I could bring nothing into settlement,*" I was, of course, aware that the utmost I could expect was a life interest in the moiety of her fortune, and I would perceive in the event of her death without issue, I should become entitled to the absolute reversion of it.

This methodical way of going to work quite

deprived me of my usual presence of mind. A fortune-hunter to stumble upon a woman of business ! What an awkward disaster ! After a considerable pause, during which I turned it over in my mind whether it would not be better to break off the match rather than submit to such conditions, I calmly observed, that not having been prepared for such propositions, I must decline giving any opinion upon them, until after I had seen my solicitor. Miss Griffin coloured a little at this answer, and remarked rather precipitately that, "all things

the contemplated union ; but Miss Griffin's life was nearly as good as my own ; at least I knew no reason why she should not last thirty or even forty years longer. The question, then, was, whether it would be expedient to sit down for life on five hundred pounds per annum with that amiable lady. I trust the reader has a better opinion of me, notwithstanding my disclosures, than to suppose that I aimed at the possession of Miss Griffin's principal, for the purpose of squandering it in selfish pleasures, without any regard to her comfort and happiness. I hope I was incapable of any such views ; but the command of ten thousand pounds might be made available to many schemes for advancement in life, from which I should be shut out, if I only possessed a life income.

After much anxious deliberation, the balance turned in favour of adhering to my engagement. In the first place, I hoped to persuade Miss Griffin to let me have the control of a part of her principal, and failing this, I trusted that, in the event of our marriage proving unprolific, she would be induced to relieve

me from the restrictions of the settlement. Lastly, I was tempted to seek shelter in the haven of matrimony from the treacherous winds and waves which beset the voyage of an adventurer on the sea of life. A man whose clear property consisted of no more than six pounds sterling and a few chattels, could hardly be considered deficient in spirit in coming to such a conclusion.

CHAPTER XIX.

I WAITED on Miss Griffin, and informed her with a good grace, that I acquiesced in her proposals. Business being thus disposed of, our conversation became tender, and I besought my fair one with great earnestness, to which my sense of pressing exigence gave a very engaging air of sincerity, to name an early day for the ceremony. She chid my impatience with an affectation of playful coyness, which had well nigh disturbed my digestion, but, by an effort, I swallowed the rising qualm, and persevering in my solicitations, at length extorted her consent that the nuptials should be celebrated that day three weeks ; before which time, she assured me in sober seriousness, that neither the lawyers nor the milliners, although they should be urged to use the utmost expe-

dition, could be expected to complete their respective duties.

After canvassing many ingenious devices for raising the wind, I was eventually constrained to make application to my cousin, who, after felicitating me upon my good fortune, observed that, though according to the strict letter, he could not perhaps call upon me to fulfil my part of our agreement, yet he felt quite persuaded that, as a man of honour, I should feel bound by it, inasmuch as he had started, and until very recently supported me as a gentleman,

he had an equitable claim to profit by the agreement; but certainly, if I thought proper to view it with the eyes of a pettifogger, he was excluded. I might act as I pleased; all he had to observe was, that if I expected him to keep honour with me, I must do the correct and handsome thing by him: and as to my proposal to borrow a sum of money, he was very sorry, but he could not entertain it without better security than I had offered.

The rogue, fully aware of the advantage which he retained by being the sole possessor of my secret, doubted not that he could thereby intimidate me into compliance with his conditions; but I was resolved not to submit tamely to his insolence and extortion. Emulating his own coolness, I calmly replied, that I understood his allusion and menace; that he might, if he chose, publish me for an impostor, but it would be of course for him to consider whether his interests as a tradesman in the place would be benefited by the fact of his having been a party principally concerned in palming a valet as a gentleman

of family and fashion upon the residents and visitors at Bath; for in the event of any disclosure being made, I should take care that the whole truth should come out. As to my marriage with Miss Griffin, so far from its being worth any extraordinary sacrifice, I had hardly been able to make up my mind to it, and the slightest obstacle would now suffice to decide me upon breaking it off. If he would advance me a small sum, I did not object, in consideration of my not being able to offer marketable security, to give him a moderate

missory note at six months date for one hundred and twenty-five pounds.

My engagement with Miss Griffin having been diligently published by the lady herself, immediately became the subject of conversation in every drawing-room, and superseded the scarcely yet decayed gossip of Miss Jellico's elopement. I was fully prepared to endure my share of the ridicule which I foresaw that such a coalition would produce. But my partner, unfortunately for me, though happily for herself, was insensible to the absurdity of our situation ; she rather considered it a triumphant one, to judge by her anxiety to appear with me in all public places. She paraded the streets arm-in-arm with me daily ; exhibited me by her side in the front row of a theatre ; and, dressed with the airiness of seventeen, dragged me about at parties and balls,—nay, at the latter, insisted even on my dancing with her ! It required all my fortitude to bear up under the half-suppressed jeers, sneers, and laughter, to which we were subjected. I found that I had lost a great deal in public estimation by this

engagement, which seemed so much inferior to my pretensions, that people began to question whether those pretensions had not been somewhat overrated. Now that my object was gained, I regarded these disparaging whispers with great indifference, having no longer much apprehension of my real quality being discovered ; and could my Delia have been a little less fond, or had she at least abstained from the open display of her love, I should have enjoyed, not indeed much blissful expectation, but a quiet content, which, though not so exciting, was

of your last master, Lord Leighton ; he said he thought he recollected your face when you came into the room, and is now ready to swear that he has seen you bring notes to his sister from Lord Leighton. The rascal says he *owes you one* for not having given the table their revenge ; so that by this time to-morrow it will be all over the town. Tuchet was the person he mentioned it to, and he came and told me ; I, of course, shammed ignorant, and swore I didn't believe a word of it ; but he swore again that he could bring forward proofs, and he will too, for he hates you, because he thinks you smoked him."

I silently revolved for a few minutes what was to be done in this emergency ; Smallcombe anxiously hung upon my lips, but without awaiting the exposition of my sentiments, he resumed.

"Do you think," said he, "you could humbug the old woman by making her still believe it's all right ; I 'm afraid it 's no use to try and keep the report from her ; but perhaps you could get her out of the place, or hurry up the wedding upon some pretence ?"

I told him that I did not despair of still being able to carry the matter through with a high hand, only I must be left to myself; and as I saw that all he cared for was the perilous situation of his hundred pounds, I informed him (to prevent useless importunity), that I had already sunk that sum in the preparations for my marriage; the consummation of which, therefore, was not only the sole chance he had of being reimbursed, but even of recovering the smallest fraction. He looked very blank at this intimation, and implored

CHAPTER XX.

I DID not, as may be supposed, enjoy a very refreshing slumber that night, and, at as early an hour next day as decency would permit, I repaired to Miss Griffin's lodgings; not prepared with any particular plan of conduct, but meaning to act as circumstances might direct. I entered the room with an unabashed forehead, and found my bride elect holding an open letter, the contents of which I inferred, from a glance at her countenance, were not of an agreeable nature. From these portents, I was not at all surprised to find that the epistle related to myself; but I affected great astonishment at reading it, for, without noticing my salutation, she placed it in my hand as soon as I approached her. The letter was anonymous, and professed to be from a friend,

who wished to caution her against becoming the victim of imposture. It then proceeded with a very accurate statement of the vicissitudes which I had experienced the last five or six years ; and concluded three sides of a sheet of awkward facts with a solemn asseveration of their truth. I had scarcely finished the perusal, when Miss Griffin burst into an invective against the anonymous slanderer ; but stopped suddenly when she observed the astonishment which I had at first assumed settling into a profound gravity. The fact was, I had not the hardihood to oppose a callous denial to such a circumstantial detail ; besides, the stake was hardly sufficient to tempt me to such an outrageous breach of morality. I obeyed a sudden impulse, therefore, to make a full confession, and throw myself upon her love and mercy.

“ Madam,” said I, “ it is with shame and contrition I acknowledge that the allegations of this paper are not altogether unfounded ; to be perfectly unreserved with you, they are substantially correct.” I then essayed to enter

upon an extenuation of my fraud ; when Miss Griffin, with features distorted by rage and a voice of thunder, burst forth thus :

“ You audacious wretch ! ”

After this first terrific explosion of fury, she paused a few seconds to collect words, and launch forth another volley, looking daggers at me meanwhile. I endeavoured, in vain, to avert the tempest by a submissive look and deprecatory gesture. She assailed me with a torrent of vituperative eloquence, which I found it hopeless to resist ; for it must be admitted that the gentler sex are commonly far superior to us in this talent of invective. After having exhausted her stock of epithets, she pronounced, “ You — you — you ! ” pausing between each repetition of the pronoun for some new term of abuse, and then went off into strong hysterics.

At this juncture, several maid-servants rushed into the room ; having, no doubt, been summoned to the door by the unusual elevation of Miss Griffin's voice, and remained there in case their services should be required. To the

hands of these damsels, I consigned the agitated lady, and effected a speedy retreat. I hurried back to my lodgings, where I was glad to hide my face from the sight of mankind. Disappointment and regret for waste of time—shame at the exposure which I had incurred, and a degree of remorse for that into which I had betrayed Miss Griffin, who, however ridiculous, was still a woman, and had acted upon the faith and general impression of my being a gentleman;—these emotions sunk me for many hours into an inactive despondency. On my recovery, I made preparations for immediate departure, not caring again to encounter a Bath face; I stole out at twilight to discharge a few trifling debts, and leaving my cousin Smallcombe to practise the virtue of patience at the suburban tavern where we had appointed to meet, I engaged a place in the London mail; and next morning at daybreak, on opening my eyes, found myself rattling over the stones of the great city.

CHAPTER XXI.

I took up my quarters in an obscure eating-house in the City, where I might, without interruption, reflect upon the past, and digest my plans for the future. Stripped in a moment of my borrowed plumes, and consigned back again to my original mean condition, I could do nothing for some days but dwell upon my life for the last six months, which at length seemed to fade into the indistinctness and improbability of a dream ; and I believe I might ultimately have wrought myself to doubt whether it was not all an hallucination of my brain, had not the organs of public intelligence convinced me that it was a reality. About a week after my retreat, taking up a newspaper, I found a paragraph, copied from a Bath journal, alluding to my

adventure. My name, though not printed at length, was plainly indicated. I was described as a person of "most gentlemanly exterior, and elegant address," who had, by these recommendations, introduced myself into the highest company, and most fashionable circles at Bath. It went on to state, "An absurd report has reached our ears, that the individual in question was a footman out of place, which we notice only as an instance of the extravagance of surmise upon every uncommon occasion. We need hardly observe, that such a man

heightens the villany of this black design : F—W—ns has a wife and six children, now resident in the sister kingdom. We regret to add, that our respected townsman, Mr. Smallcombe, has been peculiarly the dupe of this adventurer, who lodged in the house of that gentleman, by whom he was supplied not only with goods to a considerable amount, but a pecuniary advance, which he obtained on the plausible representation of not being able to arrange his affairs time enough for his contemplated marriage. Other tradesmen have been sufferers, but not to so great an extent. It is supposed that the fellow, who absconded on the first whisper of suspicion, has escaped to the Continent.”

The reader is enabled to judge how far the “accurate information” of this editor is correct. It is but justice to myself to declare, that his assertion of tradesmen at Bath having suffered by me, was not better founded than his other statements. It is true, that I had received goods and money from the respectable Mr. Smallcombe ; nevertheless I considered

him still in my debt. The part of the paragraph which related to that worthy, was probably furnished by himself; not so much from animosity against me, as to avert suspicion from fixing upon him as an accomplice; for, when I was informed of the discovery of my secret, I had taken the precaution, in order to preclude any attempt on the part of my cousin to recover any portion of the hundred pounds he had advanced me, to acquaint him that I had already invested that sum in preparations for my marriage. This, however,

I were fortunate enough to obtain a situation without a reference, (for it would hardly be safe now, to represent myself as having been valet to the late Lord Leighton,) I should still lie under continual apprehensions of being identified with the Bath swindler ; in which event, ruin, almost irretrievable, would be my lot. Bitterly did I then bewail my temerity in having been tempted to explore a short cut to fortune, by a path which left me so bad a retreat. I had to begin my career anew, and to re-encounter all my former struggles, with additional perplexities. My adventures at Bath having acquired much publicity, I could not apply myself to any of my former friends, all of whom, either from policy or disapprobation, would surely disown me. At one time, I was more than half disposed to go to my former friend and patron, Drew, and lay my case before him without reserve ; but subsequent reflection induced me to postpone this design until I should be reduced to the last extremity ; as, in case of matters turning out better than I expected, I did not consider it

tion, and my purse and spi
sinking, when venturing one
time since my return to I
crowded streets, as I was
Cheapside, I was conscious
had stopped short, and was
This prompted me to quick
I was almost immediately
strong grasp of a hand upo
name was, at the same time,
friendly voice, which, togeth
and figure, I almost instantl
was Tibbetts—the same fa
who had accompanied me in
ney to the metropolis, and
remembered, I had shaken
g

After greetings were exchanged, Tibbetts proposed, (that is to say, if I was not too proud,) to adjourn to a tavern hard by, when he would treat me to a glass of something. I acquiesced with great affability, and the next minute saw us seated together in a coffee-room over two glasses of brandy and water. We now mutually glanced at each other's appointments. My friend's countenance could not conceal his surprise at seeing me carelessly dressed in faded garments; while I was no less struck by his improved exterior. He had positively a steady, respectable appearance; no longer dirty and slovenly, his person and linen were irreproachable, and his clothes had the gloss of novelty, although as ill-made, and as ill-worn, as ever. Not a trace of any former neglect was observable in his manner; he repeated several times his delight at seeing me once more, shook my hand most affectionately, regardless of the stares of strangers in the room, and urged very earnestly that we should get drunk together on the spot, in commemoration of our happy encounter; and it was with difficulty I could

portunities to be imm
with my history, since w
extending over nearly te
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gagement to meet the ma
tain house of entertainme
enjoy a private room, a b
a bowl of punch.

CHAPTER XXII.

I FIRST related my adventures, and as I had entire confidence in my friend's fidelity, I withheld nothing from him. He listened to my narrative with interest a good deal heightened by wonder. But when I came to recount my proceedings at Bath, he smiled, shook his head, and declared he was not to be gammoned at that rate. I very gravely assured him that what was stated was no more than the simple fact, but it cost me several solemn asseverations to convince him that I was in right earnest. Then, indeed, astonishment was painted in his countenance so ludicrously, that I could not forbear laughing, which interpreting as a confession of fraud, he relapsed into incredulity. However, he was at length satisfied, and I resumed my story, omitting no par-

ticular which could enhance his marvels. When I had finished my relation, he gave full vent to his emotions of surprise and admiration, which had as yet escaped only in interjections and sundry very native queries and remarks. I was amused, also, at detecting a slight degree of envy mingled with his feelings, a manifestation which I had never before observed in this unpretending and good-natured creature.

"Well," said he, "some people are born with silver spoons in their mouths. I might have waited long enough, before I could rule

that you are so much better off in the end than myself; and as I always say, what's the odds, so as you're 'appy?"

With this philosophical reflection, he consoled himself under the unequal distribution of fortune's favours. Ten years ago, perhaps, I might have disdained the equality which Mr. Tibbetts arrogated even after the deductions that he had allowed, but I was now by no means so certain that the balance of substantial merit was on my side. I made a good-humoured answer, therefore, and found that my friend's spleen had wholly evaporated. I then called upon him for his own narrative, with which he immediately favoured me to the following effect.

"When we parted," said he, "you recollect that I was well provided for, having had the luck, through my friend Mr. Robinson, the house-steward, to be hired into the service of the Earl of Appleshaw. But owing to my own folly, I did not keep this situation long. Robinson, you must know, gave a great many parties, at which I was employed to attend,

mind to be content and
There was the same son
in this house, that you de
at that lord's where you
tertaind his guests with
plate, and the finest wine
the servants hated him be
let any of them have any
them dared complain of h
lord, because he had the
in him, and would hear t
vantage. Well, so thing
six months, when Robin
never thought of my takin
duct, began to employ m
very suspicious nature, and

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this kind, I thought I would take the liberty of asking some explanation of them, but received a very severe and violent reprimand from my employer, who threatened, if ever I presumed to ask any more impertinent questions, to turn me that moment out of the house. This threat checked me for some time, but my conscience would not be easy, for I could not help thinking that I was made the agent of dishonest practices. I communicated my suspicions to one of my fellow-servants, an under-footman, who advised me to mind my own business, as whether what I supposed was the case or not, I should get no thanks for my pains. I was imprudent enough to disregard this counsel, but big with conscious rectitude, resolved to lay the whole matter before the Earl himself. I failed not to do so, but instead of meeting the warm commendation which I thought my fidelity deserved, his lordship only manifested a cold surprise and incredulity; he said it was only fair that I should confront Mr. Robinson with my extraordinary tale, and ringing the bell, ordered the immediate attend-

ance of the house-steward. He appeared in a few minutes, and started a little when he saw me, who screwed myself to gaze at him with unshaken firmness. 'Robinson,' said the Earl, with a slight smile, and a tone of voice which seemed to imply that he did not put much faith in my statement, 'this man accuses you of making away with plate and linen, and I know not what.' Then turning to me, he desired me to repeat my charge. I humbly begged leave to remind his lordship that I had made no *charge*; I had only stated what might

imitation of his lord's manner, affected to treat the matter as absurd and contemptible. He admitted that he had occasionally sent me with parcels to different quarters of the town, but they were on his own private business, with which he should not think of troubling his lordship. But if the Earl had any doubts, he offered to produce all the persons to whom the parcels were respectively addressed, to give evidence as to their contents. This proposal was rejected by his lordship as quite unnecessary; upon which, Mr. Robinson earnestly requested, as a personal favour, that his lordship would condescend to see and examine the individuals alluded to, as he could never enjoy a moment's peace, if he thought the least shadow of a doubt of his integrity remained upon his lordship's mind. The Earl assured him that he had not, and never had the slightest doubt of the kind; then turning to me, he reprehended my officiousness, which he could only attribute to spite, or a habit of associating with bad characters.

He then asked Robinson where I came

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self to find out any solution for this mystery, contented himself with desiring his steward to pay me my wages, and turn me out of the house. And having given these orders, he dismissed us both. The steward, after indulging in a few malignant observations on the failure of my attempt to criminate him, ordered me to strip and turn out; and as I received no stipulated wages, he peremptorily refused to give me a farthing, although I had been led to expect that I was to receive ten pounds per annum, of which there was a full quarter due to me.

“ I was now pretty ill off, not having another friend in London, and only a few shillings in my pocket. As to my wardrobe, I carried the whole of it on my back without inconvenience. But I enjoyed good health, and a clear conscience, so you may be sure I did not want a light heart in the midst of my misfortune. I first tried to find you out, thinking, if you were not as badly off as myself, you might lend me a good turn; but on inquiring at your lodgings, I was told you had left some months, and they

knew nothing about you. I then gave up the pursuit, as I might as well have looked for a needle in a bottle of hay; and sticking my hands in my pockets, wandered about, putting my faith in Providence. I waited patiently for the expected preferment, until my landlord turned me out into the street, because I could not continue to pay the shilling a week for my bed in advance.

“It was a bitter March day, and gusts of wind from a clear sky were raising clouds of dry dust, which charged against my face like a volley of ground glass.

“My stomach was empty, and there was no prospect of its being speedily replenished. In this wretched state was I when Satan, who had no doubt been lying in wait for my immortal soul, thought it a good opportunity to hold out a lure for the same. I was passing through the blind alley which leads from Bolton Row to Berkeley Street, when a gentleman in a muffler and great travelling-cloak, who was hastening on before me, probably to catch one of the coaches in Piccadilly, happened in pull-

ing out his pocket-handkerchief to drop a small net-purse, which fell upon the pavement. I cast a glance behind and forward; there was no second person within sight, and the gentleman hurried on unconscious of his loss. I took up the purse, the contents of which, as they were visible, appeared to be three bank-notes and a sovereign. One of the notes I could clearly discern to be a fifty. My heart beat quick, and my body, from shivering with extreme cold, broke into a glow of heat. Old Nick then set to work, and immediately placed beneath my nostrils a smoking round of boiled beef and greens, with a pot of double stout. He then clothed me from head to foot, put a pipe in my mouth, and bid me defy care. He told me I should be a fool to hesitate, as self-preservation was the first law of nature, and there could be no doubt that I wanted the money much more than he who had lost it. The cunning old rogue urged, likewise, the certain impunity, as it was a thousand to one the gentleman never made any attempt to recover his property lost in the streets of London, and

even if anything so improbable should take place as the purse being traced to my possession, he could not prove that I had seen it fall from his pocket, as he was not aware of my having been behind him.

“ These temptations and arguments had prevailed, and I was thrusting the prize into the pocket of my pantaloons, when a sudden impulse stayed my hand, and after a moment’s irresolution, I set off at full speed after the gentleman. I came up with him breathless, and, wiping the perspiration from my forehead with one hand, I held out his purse with the other. He recognized and received it with an inquiring look of surprise, which I satisfied as soon as I could speak, by a simple statement of the fact. He examined the contents of his purse, and finding them right, put it by, at the same time commending my honesty, and fumbling in his waistcoat, drew forth three-pence, which he handed me as ‘something to drink his health with!’ So saying, he went on, leaving me not very deeply impressed with his munificence; but the con-

sciousness of having done my duty, and conquered the devil, was as good as meat, clothes, and lodging.

“I procured a penny-loaf and a draught of small ale, with the reward of my honesty, which served to keep the wolf out for that day. At night I laid myself down in the porch of a large house, where I was very comfortably sheltered from the wind and weather. Here I enjoyed a very sound sleep ; and so much was I overcome with fatigue and hunger, that I believe I should have slept till noon, had I not been roused at six o'clock by the guardian of the night bawling the hour, a sound which had not till then disturbed my slumber. I started up, but did not escape without a reprimand from that vigilant functionary, for my presumption in selecting such a dormitory. ‘D’ye think,’ said he, ‘such varment as you is to be allowed to lay down at gentlemen’s doors?’ and desired me to move on. I made no answer, but did as I was ordered, though I found myself so stiff that I could not walk without difficulty.

“In the course of the day, when driven to the extremity of cold and want, I begged a small trifle from the passers-by, for which I was taken into custody by one of the city officers, and carried before the Lord Mayor. His Lordship asked me, with stern gravity, how I came to be found begging? I replied with truth, that I had begged because I wanted to buy food, and had no other means of obtaining it. Upon which, my Lord, with still more sternness, warned me not to be impertinent, unless I wished to be sent to the treadmill. He then declared, with emphasis, looking around at the same time with an air of conscious merit, that no such fellows as I should infest the city during *his* mayoralty; a sentiment which was received with nods and murmurs of approbation by sundry corpulent elderly gentlemen present, regular devotees of Ceres and Bacchus, I warrant them. His Lordship then returned to me, and desired me to give an account of myself, which I did without reserve, or any deviation from the truth. But my story was received with smiles of derision and incredulity, and his Lord-

ship condescended to make some facetious remarks upon it, which made the corpulent gentry shake their sides with laughter. After amusing himself and his friends a little longer at my expense, he discharged me with an admonition, that if I were found offending in the like manner again I should be sent to Bridewell.

“ I was going out of the office a good deal dissatisfied with the usage I had experienced, when I was followed by a respectable-looking man, who accosted me, and asked me some questions about my family, which proved that he had been acquainted with it. My answers having satisfied him that I was what I represented myself to be, he shook me by the hand, and calling a coach, informed me that I should accompany him to his house, as I was his relative, my mother and himself having been first cousins. He farther informed me, that he was a coal-merchant, in a pretty good way ; that he had a wife but no children ; and assured me, that if he could not employ me himself, he would take care to recommend me

to a good situation. While I was thanking him for his kindness, and congratulating myself on my good fortune, which I attributed both literally and religiously to my refusing the aid of the devil the day before, we were set down at my cousin's house; a neat little place with a brass-plate on the door, and in a quiet retired street.

"Mr. Mullins introduced me to his wife, explaining in a few words who I was, and that he had found me by accident in great need. The good woman welcomed me very heartily, and in

this capacity, whom his own sense of justice would not have allowed him to displace for me, even could I have consented to such an arrangement. He bestirred himself, however, so effectually in my behalf, that in less than a week I procured a junior clerk's place in a great wholesale house, where I have remained ever since. At first my wages were only twenty pounds a-year; but I gradually got promoted, and my salary is now seventy pounds per annum: I do not despair of ultimately becoming head clerk, as there is a rumour that in the course of another two or three years the gentleman at present in that situation will become a partner in the firm. Mean time, I have a tolerably easy place, being at my desk only from nine o'clock till six, after which I am my own master. So that 's all I've got to tell you of my adventures."

CHAPTER XXIII.

I COULD not help contrasting the steady industry and good conduct of Tibbetts with my own dissipated and more brilliant, but less profitable, career. At the end of ten years, he, whose humble qualifications I had despised, was

was now spoiled for any mechanical pursuit. Much as I desiderated wealth, I could not seek it by the slow and monotonous labours of the desk. Tibbetts looked blank at this intimation, which rendered his proffer of service almost nugatory. He offered to recommend me to the service of his employer, who was a member of parliament, and kept a splendid establishment in Grosvenor Square; but my pride could not brook the humiliation of re-appearing at the West-end as a footman, where I had so long shone as major-domo and valet. I preferred a situation not so conspicuous, as I did not wish my fallen fortunes to be witnessed by any of my former associates.

The unwearied friendship of Tibbetts very shortly provided me with a place which suited my present views. I was hired as butler to an eminent physician who resided in Bedford Square, a quarter where I should be as secure from recognition as if I were in Kamschatka. But I enjoyed my incognito at the expense of much humiliation; for though I was dignified with the name of a butler, I was obliged to

work. I was, indeed, so i
long want of practice, in pe
that my master reproved
fellow, and wondered what
He would either have set :
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tice were chiefly confined to
of human maladies.

As I did not wish to ch

a man of low origin, of coarse and familiar manners, and of no great depth of learning, but he was what is termed a clever fellow, and owed his reputation, I suspect, more to his knowledge of human nature than of medical science. He had written a book to prove that all disorders, mental and bodily, were to be referred to the prevalent system of living, yet was he himself a most ardent lover of the table.

After the labours of the day, he either dined abroad, or entertained a party at his own house. He kept a French cook, and his board was covered with dishes which, by his own showing, contained the elements of all the diseases to which the human frame was subject. His company consisted, almost exclusively, of members of his own profession. These were men familiar with almost every variety of wretchedness; whose daily occupation it was, to dwell upon scenes calculated to inspire horror and disgust; to witness the untimely blight of youth, the sudden destruction of matured happiness, and the protracted sufferings of age; to contemplate misery which

they could not alleviate, and the approach of death which they could not avert. Yet I never beheld a merrier set of mortals. It could not be owing to the force of habit, for many of Dr. Mason's guests were in their noviciate; young men, no doubt, of average amiability in their domestic relations; yet the zest with which they listened to, and sometimes recounted, cases of complicated agony, or of living bodies maimed and tortured by some exquisite surgical operation, made my blood run cold, as I stood at the sideboard, an unwilling listener. This was, however, only when the conversation took a serious and professional turn; more commonly, it was of a jocular nature, with abundant ridicule of imaginary invalids, who, according to their accounts, seemed to constitute the most numerous and profitable class of their patients. What indignation would have inflated the breasts of the sinecure dignitaries, the snug annuitants, and many others who have means and leisure to cherish their health, could they have been conveyed behind the arras, where maladies, to them of the utmost

magnitude and importance, were discussed with levity and ridicule, accompanied by roars of laughter? I was surprised, at first, that they should discuss the secrets of the profession so openly before servants, not considering, that if their discourse were to be published next day in all the newspapers, though it might deprive them of their respective patients, so unceremoniously handled, it would hardly have the effect of performing a single cure. Some of these gentlemen, impatient at such trifling, could not always restrain their contempt; but their refusal to prescribe, only caused them to be replaced by more accommodating practitioners. Others, however, plumed themselves on the gravity with which they could attend to the details and symptoms of these fictitious diseases, the titles by which they designated, and the innocuous compounds which they prescribed for them, to the great satisfaction of their customers.

I did not remain in Dr. Mason's service more than a few months, having quitted it on the following occasion. Among the more distinguish-

ed guests who occasionally adorned my master's hospitable board, was one Mr. Froth, a celebrated author. This gentleman, happening one day at the Doctor's table, to mention that he was in want of a person of good education, and some talent, to act as his amanuensis, it immediately struck me that I was his man. Knowing Dr. Mason's liberal disposition, I did not hesitate to request his permission to take this opportunity of bettering myself, and to solicit his recommendation.

The Doctor willingly acceded to my wishes, and was pleased to say that he considered me well qualified for the situation, though at the same time he should regret losing a domestic of such capability as mine. That I might miss no chance of success, he despatched me forthwith, with a note of favourable introduction to Mr. Froth. I found that gentleman at home, and experienced a reception suitable to such credentials. He examined me touching my qualifications, and was pleased to express satisfaction at my replies; but when

I informed him that I had served the late Mr. Wainwright in a similar capacity, "Then," said he with considerable acidity, "you have served a confounded old fool." I was for the moment rather surprised at a censure so unjust; but when I recollected that Mr. Wainwright (probably from having lived in the days of literary giants, or from the proverbial propensity of seniors to laud the past in disparagement of the present times) had been wont to underrate the existing race of geniuses, and had upon one occasion alluded to this very Mr. Froth in contemptuous terms, my wonder ceased. However, as, according to the old proverb, a living ass is better than a dead lion, I said nothing, and thus left it open to Mr. Froth to infer that I acquiesced in his opinion of my deceased master, of whom he went on to say,

"He set up for a critic, forsooth! and affected to sneer at the greatest writers of the age, because they were above his low comprehension, and soared beyond the limits of his

bigoted notions. Old Wainwright was quite superficial, he had no Philosophy, no soul for the Beautiful, and as to the idea of the Universal, he could not take it in. Besides, I can prove that he wrote bad English : therefore, you may depend upon it, that it can be no recommendation to you to have lived with Mr. Wainwright."

I assured him that I did not value myself on having been secretary to that gentleman ; I had only mentioned the fact, to prove that I had some experience in penmanship. Mr. Froth admitted that the circumstance might lead to such an inference, but no farther. He then proceeded to detail the duties which he should require from an amanuensis, namely, to write to his dictation, sometimes in short-hand, when the inspiration flowed in very rapidly ; to copy out MSS. fairly for the press ; to correct the first proof sheets with sufficient discretion to supply a word or even a member of a sentence which might be obviously wanting ; besides various other little minor offices connected with the art of composition. All these

duties I undertook to perform, and the remuneration having been agreed upon, I was desired to commence my attendance as soon as Dr. Mason could provide himself with another servant.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Mr. FROTH was reputed one of the greatest geniuses of the age ; he was equally great in poetry, philosophy, history, fiction, politics, morality, and what not. The versatility of his genius was only to be equalled by its fertility. Within the compass of a little year, he has produced works under each of the above specified heads, besides miscellanies. He was at once the idol of the trade, the critics, and the public. His fame had penetrated even the surface of society ; nay, perhaps there were no classes among which his performances were more extensively read and justly appreciated than those of apprentices to the more refined and polite branches of human industry — ladies' maids, to wit, and gentlemen's gentlemen. I, myself, was acquainted with most of his works,

having perused them in those halcyon days when I was led captive in the silken chains of Julia Peck. Froth was her favourite author : Julia, it will be remembered, was a great admirer of fine writing, and Froth had confessedly no superior in that line. But though she had tears for his pathos and smiles for his wit, yet what she particularly affected in him was his depth and originality. He was none of your flashy, superficial scribblers ; every page almost presented some profound remark or exquisite sentiment, distinguished as such, according to their value, either by italics or capitals, for the convenience of the careless reader. Most of these articles were, doubtless, new, and of genuine manufacture ; but, I am told, the practised eye could detect, intermingled with them, a considerable proportion of second-hand wit and wisdom, though reproduced and furbished up with an ingenuity highly creditable to the artist.

Mr. Froth was a Byronist — that is to say, he belonged to that numerous sect of which the noble author of “ Childe Harold ” was the

apostle. I believe, indeed, he was considered by himself and others to be the legitimate successor of that great genius — the inheritor of his poetic mantle. A personal resemblance which Mr. Froth was supposed to bear to his illustrious prototype first pointed, it is said, to the discovery of the intellectual similarity between them. Therefore, if it were not, as the philosophic prince hath it, “considering too curiously to consider so,” one might entertain the reflection that, had it not been for the circumstance of Mr. Froth’s having a pale face and a head of curly black hair, the world might never have been enriched with certain immortal works, and the author have lived and died unknown to fame. Such are the accidents by which the destinies of human-kind are not unfrequently governed !

Mr. Froth was a favourite of fortune. In addition to his mental and bodily gifts, he was largely endowed with the good things of this life. He had a handsome private fortune, a great part of which was dispensed in hospitality and munificence to his poorer brethren

of the quill. That this was disinterested benevolence, who can doubt? since, in return for his solid pudding, all that he got was empty praise. And let no rash person institute a comparison between him and Mr. Fosberry in this respect, for feeding and favours are notoriously important, if not the most important, bonds of political parties; but what advantage can a great author, whose fame fills the universe, propose to himself, or what pleasure can he derive from the trencher-plaudits of a few obscure scribblers?

Mr. Froth combined pleasure with business, if it be not profanation to apply that homely phrase to the sublime avocations of the muse. He sought to blend the man of fashion with the author—a somewhat difficult amalgamation, but accomplished by Mr. Froth. He paid great attention to his handsome person, and arrayed it bravely. Devoted to the fair sex, he lived under the delightful impression that he was amiable in their eyes. He was, theoretically, the most dissolute of men; but I could never discover that he was incontinent

in practice. I have known him carry on tender correspondences with half a dozen fair ones simultaneously; but as his vows of unutterable love and unalterable fidelity were usually couched in verse, the language of fiction, he cannot, perhaps, be deemed forsworn. Besides these, his open amours, he had commonly several anonymous affairs upon his hands, the conduct of which, however, he delegated chiefly to me soon after I entered his service.

I have thought it a proper mark of respect to premise this slight and imperfect sketch of the genius, character, and habits of the most illustrious person I ever had the honour to serve.

CHAPTER XXV.

My master devoted a certain portion of every day to composition, when I acted as his amanuensis. I assisted him, also, in the mechanical part of his labours, such as finding rhymes and synonymes; and I soon acquired such facility in this branch of my business, that I could readily clothe the young idea in a respectable suit of verse or prose, which frequently required only a few touches from the master-hand to make presentable.

It required no exertion of ingenuity to discover where this great genius betrayed the failing of mortality—his weak point was an inordinate love of praise. He courted it alike for his writings, his conversation, his person, nay, even for his dress, table, and furniture. He could not brook being excelled in anything.

Now I considered myself, I think without vanity, an adept in that most important of all accomplishments (next, perhaps, to impudence)—flattery. I had cultivated it as the chief qualification of my profession; and from a natural aptitude, improved by much study and experience of the art, I could exhibit my adulation in every form, from plastering with a trowel to the delicate strokes of a camel-hair pencil. I could administer it almost as gratefully to the Wainwrights and Leightons as to the Davisons and Fosberrys. Mr. Froth preferred the bold, dashing style. He allowed himself, without even the affectation of a *nolo*, to be placed by his literary friends at the head of contemporary authors, and sanctioned their critical comparisons between his merits and those of first-rate classics. He emulated a Sefton in gastronomy, and challenged the envy of a D'Orsay by the richness and eccentricity of his dress. However, it would be invidious to stigmatize all this by the contemptible name of vanity; say rather that it was an exuberance of that noble infirmity of great minds—ambition.

It is not, of course, for me to hazard an opinion on the merits of my employer ; perhaps, indeed, impartial posterity alone can decide the important question. A portion of the press, actuated in all likelihood by envy or spleen, threw out the gross insinuation that his cook was the main prop of his fame ; one of the many exaggerations which are extracted from a particle of truth ; for how is it to be expected that esurient men of letters, and fashion also, should strictly mete out the due amount of praise to a wealthy and hospitable author.

Although I had stood behind a chair when I was engaged by Mr. Froth, yet, being dignified by him with the sounding title of private secretary, I was, in that quality, placed at the foot of his table, where I acquitted myself with a gravity suitable to the versatility of my character and the dignity of the situation. I was, indeed, enjoined by Mr. Froth to pay him the most reverential respect before company, not even being permitted to relax my muscles when he would set the table in a roar ; a privation which was not very painful to me,

as my master's wit was generally too refined and far-fetched for my vulgar and illiterate understanding. My business was to carve, and signify by look and gesture that I considered Mr. Froth the first of human beings.

In the evening we sometimes received ladies—not, indeed, it must be admitted, of first-rate quality or reputation, but very charming and intellectual. The incense offered by their fair hands was, of course, the most grateful to my master. He usually received it reclining on a sofa, with half-closed eyes and lips separated with a smile expressive of serene satisfaction.

Mr. Froth was not so puffed up with praise as to be insensible to adverse opinions. Not, indeed, that such criticism ever humbled, it only incensed him. He was in the habit of retorting with more virulence the virulent attacks of reviewers, whatever might be their authority. The inferior sort took advantage of his touchiness to write themselves into notice, and some of them, who kept up a regular

warfare with him, throve apace under the benign influence of his satire. It would have been well had these strifes been always confined to hard words; but, sometimes, I am concerned to state, they proceeded to more serious extremities. A hostile meeting, and exchange of shots (happily harmless) between Mr. Froth and an editor was the consequence of one of these differences, and a fistic encounter resulted from another.

Of the latter I was witness, and it happened as follows: an elaborate article had been put forth in a periodical of no great mark, with the intent to demonstrate, by quotation and commentary, that Mr. Froth's productions possessed no sterling merit, and that he himself was little better than an ass. Now this heresy, though it had frequently been hinted, had never before been so plainly propounded, nor so plausibly supported. Froth, therefore, was proportionably irate; and, bent upon revenge, he instituted an inquiry respecting the writer, who turned out to be a poor

devil of a broken usher, who had been plucked at college, and lately dismissed from a country academy for his deficiency in classic lore. A dark smile lighted up the features of the aggrieved author when he heard this intelligence; he seized a pen on the instant, and spreading the ominous foolscap before him, swore that he would make minced meat of the unhappy ex-usher. Accordingly, a dreadful article was penned, in which the rash critic's lack of Greek and Latin was mercilessly exposed, and his utter incapacity to judge of English from thence, triumphantly inferred.

On the second morning after the publication of this crushing reply in a rival journal, while Froth was still revelling in the luxury of consummated revenge, a stranger was announced as desiring to see him on particular business, and forthwith followed at the servant's heels a little dingy figure, which immediately shuffled up to the great genius, and in hasty accents, asked him if his name was Froth? who straightway having cast a supercilious glance

at the dingy intruder, answered in the affirmative. The stranger then announced himself by the name of Smellie, at the mention of which, the genius elevated his eyebrows, curled his lip, and favoured the squalid figure with a second scrutiny still more insolent than the first, for the visiter was no other than his now classical commentator.

“ And pray, Mr. Smellie,” said he, with exquisite disdain, “ what may be your business with me ? ”

Smellie then pulled a journal from his pocket, and with tremulous hands, searched among the pages for a certain article which he thrust before the genius, demanding to know if it was written by him ? The genius took the paper, examined the article pointed out with calm derision, and returning the paper, observed that he should not answer a question which the other had no right to put to him, but that he perfectly concurred in every syllable which the article contained, if that would afford him any satisfaction.

“ Then,” cried Smellie, who spoke with a

Scotch accent, "ye mean to presume to say that I'm eegnorant of Latin and Greek?"

"We can soon put that to the test," replied my unrelenting master, and as he spoke, he took down a volume of Greek plays which he laid open upon a table, and with Sardonic courtesy, invited the poor critic to read a passage and render it into English. Smellie, however, declined the jurisdiction of the court, upon which Mr. Froth observed, "that the inference was obvious," and with an insulting bow wished his visiter good morning. But Smellie, recovering from the confusion into which he had been thrown by this perplexing challenge, became violently exasperated, and stepping close up to his tormentor, shook a lean yellow fist in his face, and told him with a grin, that he was "an empty, impertinent coxcomb."

This elicited a retort so contumelious, that the yellow fist was immediately brought into such forcible collision with the delicate features of the genius, that the eloquent blood which had just before mantled in his cheeks, now

began to flow from his nose, and in an instant, the attenuated form of Smellie measured its length upon the carpet. The critic, however, was game; he sprang up in a twinkling, and made a furious onslaught on the poet. I tried in vain to separate them. A fierce though brief conflict ensued. Froth, having the advantage in size and strength, soon made a sad example of his commentator; in less than five minutes, he gave up the contest, both eyes being nearly closed, and his flesh sorely mangled by the rings, which, unfortunately for him, adorned the fingers of his antagonist, and proved to be terrible weapons of offence. The only considerable injury which the genius sustained, was the loss of a front tooth, which, by a well-aimed thrust of the reviewer, had been sent down his throat.

When the combat was over, Mr. Froth rang the bell and ordered the servant to fetch a constable, a basin of water, and a towel. After he had cleansed his face and hands, from the evidences of the recent conflict, and passed sundry soothing remarks upon

his prostrate foe, he desired me to prepare pen and paper, and disposing himself upon a sofa, as he was wont to do, when in the act of composition, began to dictate a portion of a tragedy, upon which we were engaged at the time of poor Smellie's intrusion. We had nearly finished a scene before the constable arrived; the discomfited critic, who had in the mean time revived, stalking up and down the room in sullen silence, apparently not condescending to notice our proceedings.

He did not utter a word until my master charged the legal functionary with his safe keeping, to be produced before a police magistrate on a charge of assault and battery. He then stopped short in his walk, and entered upon an animated vindication and a counter charge; not without such frequent interruptions from my master, as might have led to a second breach of the peace, had it not been preserved by the presence of the executive; who, having heard both parties with an impartial, dispassionate countenance, at once dismissed their recriminations as irrelevant, and turning to the

reviewer, demanded of him whether he had not been the first assailant. Froth instantly replied in the affirmative, and Smellie admitted it, but added in extenuation, "He tried to take away my character and bread. He said I was eegnorant of the classics."

"Ignorant of the classics?" repeated the officer.

"Yes — he said that I was not qualified to be an instructor of youth — that I didn't understand Latin and Greek."

The constable shook his head.

"I don't know nothing about Latin and Greek; but you *hut* the gemman, didn't you?"

This was the gist of the question; admitting this, the injured usher had not a leg to stand upon; and as the functionary was insensible to the provocation he had received, nothing remained for it, but to take the peace-breaker before Sir Richard. The parties accordingly proceeded to Bow Street, Mr. Froth and myself in our own carriage, the reviewer and the constable in a hackney-coach. At the police-office, the case was fully gone into, to

the great amusement of the magistrates, and amidst the jeers of the respectable audience which usually haunt those precincts.

Smellie endeavoured to prove that Froth was no poet, and held up his literary productions to ridicule and scorn; while, on the other hand, the genius dwelt with great bitterness on the presumption of a man who was notoriously unacquainted with the Latin and Greek classics, giving an opinion upon works which he was incapable of understanding. Upon this, the reviewer appealed to the bench for their decision upon the sense of certain passages from Froth's works, which he offered to quote; but the bench declining the responsibility, he turned to the audience, and publicly offered a pecuniary reward to any person who could discover any meaning in these performances. This challenge created a great deal of merriment, and Froth was eagerly about to retort, when the chief magistrate, thinking, I suppose, that the joke had gone far enough, interposed, and recommended the parties to retire and accommodate the matter. But this being peremptorily re-

jected by my master, he was bound over to prosecute at the ensuing sessions, and the poor critic was locked up until he could procure bail.

The upshot of this affair was whimsical enough, and a signal instance of the placability of a great genius. Not only did my master forbear prosecuting this poor man any farther, but he even set him up in business as a critic, and recommended his paper, notwithstanding the author's deficiencies in classical attainments. Smellie, to do him justice, was not wanting in gratitude for this generous usage ; from unmitigated abuse, he passed, without the least difficulty, to the most enthusiastic praise of his patron, whom he ever after extolled as the first genius of the age, and not inferior to the most illustrious names in ancient or modern literature.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WHENEVER I could be spared from my attendance on Mr. Froth, I generally sought the society of my old, and fast friend, Tibbetts. In former times, it will be remembered, I had a very slight opinion of that excellent person, and, with a shrewd providence, was very solicitous to avoid the embarrassment which I thought a connection with him would occasion me, when my future splendid destinies should be fulfilled. Some dozen years had, indeed, produced a considerable difference in our situation, but not exactly as I had anticipated. My fluctuating fortunes were, alas ! reduced to a very low ebb ; while those of my friend, seemed floating on a smooth and increasing current of prosperity. It was his turn now to look down upon me, and be revenged of my

former coldness. But he neglected the opportunity, and was as much disposed to serve me, as if he had entirely forgotten the insolence of my conduct in days of yore. And such I believe was the fact: he remembered nothing of our early acquaintance, but what was agreeable. I, who never condescended to think of him as a rival, now almost despaired of outstripping him in the career of life; for numerous disappointments had greatly abated my self-confidence. Tibbetts was rapidly rising in life. His integrity and good feeling, combined with a good degree of active talent, which developed itself after he had conquered his slovenly and indolent disposition, won him the confidence and regard of his superiors, and of all who had dealings with him; insomuch, that it was intended, in process of time, when an opportunity should offer, to admit him to a share in the mercantile house with which he was connected. This event actually occurred much sooner than could have been expected; and behold, Robert Tibbetts, Esquire, a merchant of London, and a member of the

Common Council, within a twelvemonth after my return to town ! I heard of his elevation with heartfelt pleasure ; and if it was at all dashed with personal feeling, the pang was rather one of remorse, than envy ; for it would have been monstrous to repine at honours so well-merited, and meekly worn. But as he ascended the heights of fortune, my friend's ambition began to expand, and he contemplated strengthening his interests by a matrimonial alliance. He cast his eyes on no less a person than the Lady Tott, relict of Sir John Tott, Bart., citizen and tea-dealer, and sometime Lord Mayor of London. His advances in this quarter were favourably received ; and, in due course of time, he was declared her ladyship's accepted suitor. My friend announced the approaching change in his condition to me with a degree of *empressement*, and held up to my eyes, somewhat pompously, the high connection that he was about to form. But he soon descended from his stilts, to his natural manner, and broke out into an exclamation of wonder at his good luck.

“Dash it, Simon !” said he, “who would ever have thought that I should live to be a gent, and marry a lady of rank and fortune.”

“It is, indeed,” answered I, “a signal triumph of honesty and industry. When you ride in your carriage, you will never pass Berkeley Street, without being reminded of the blind passage, where, in the depth of adversity, integrity laid the foundation-stone of your fortunes.”

As I spoke these words with an emotion produced by the humiliating contrast between myself and my worthy friend, he pressed my hand, and, with great concern, applied himself to soothe my mortified feelings. But I was sadly dispirited, as well I might be, and his well-meant efforts only enhanced my despondency.

After a pause of some minutes, during which Tibbetts seemed labouring something in his mind, he began by deprecating my taking offence at the proposal he was going to make, if it did not suit my views to accept it. With

many compliments to my capability, and inducements flattering to my ambition, he came to the point, which was to offer me a clerk's situation in the house in which he was already a partner, after having, comparatively, wrought so short a time as a servant. He apologized for the smallness of the salary, (sixty pounds per annum,) and the inferiority of the situation, by pleading the rules of the house ; every member of which first entered in a subordinate capacity. The good soul had not got through half his enumeration of the prospective advantages to be derived from his scheme for my welfare, and by dwelling upon which, he anxiously sought to obviate any obstacle which my pride might oppose to it, and to get rid of the offensive character of a patron, when I interrupted him, by promptly and gratefully accepting his offer. My friend's countenance immediately kindled, and he expressed his joy in unrestrained terms. He insisted upon my spending the remainder of the day with him, to discuss our plans over a bottle. I had never before felt so elated ; not even when

I first left my paternal roof, brimful of hope, to enter upon active life. I was now fully determined to abandon all vanities and delusions, and, by devoting all my energies to business, to emulate the prosperity of my friend.

In consequence of this arrangement, I gave notice to Mr. Froth to provide himself, at his earliest convenience, with another secretary. The genius, who valued my services, was much disconcerted at this intimation, and offered me a considerable increase of stipend, and other advantages, if I would withdraw my resignation. But, finding that I was firm, in the course of a week he suited himself, and gave me my discharge.

Two days after, I was to attend my friend's nuptials, at his particular instance, in quality of best man. A spice of the old leaven, which could not be immediately eradicated, prompted me, on this occasion, to signalize my superior claims to gentility, by making my appearance in attire which, I flattered myself, would eclipse the city cut. In a word, I was tempted to ex-

habit myself in a dress suit which I had sported at the gay assemblies of Bath, and which had lain at the bottom of my box since my disastrous retreat from that place.

In this attire, to wit, extra superfine claret-coloured coat, embroidered velvet vest, tights, and fancy silks, I made my appearance at a grand entertainment in Finsbury Square, given by the second partner of Tibbotts's house, in honour of his approaching marriage. Here I was presented in due form by my friend to his bride elect, a squab figure, about four feet high, with broad features, highly dressed, loud in speech, and apparently verging towards fifty. As this was the third time she was about to visit the altar of Hymen, habit, I suppose, had cured her of that bashful diffidence, which ladies in her situation usually evince. She conversed with me with perfect familiarity, had some jocular remark for everybody who accosted her, but especially delighted in rallying her bridegroom, who, manifesting a degree of restraint and embarrassment under his impending felicity, she fixed on him the

appropriate *sobriquet* of "spooney;" and announced it to all her acquaintance, to the great increase of his confusion. Tibbetts, who evidently regarded her with mingled awe and admiration, seized me as soon as I was disengaged from her, and asked me if I did not think her exceedingly clever. He took upon himself to pronounce as a self-evident truth, that she was quite a woman of the world.

I was introduced to several important members of the commercial circles, and felt the pleasing consciousness that my stylish appearance distinguished me among the crowd. I was elevated to the height of complacency, and indulging in the brightest hopes, when, turning round to speak to a new acquaintance, my eye was suddenly blasted by a vision more appalling than that which haunted the banquet of the murderer and usurper in the play. But, alas! this was no ghost which made my blood stagnate; it was no less than the living, breathing, ample form of Lady Jellico! I stood transfixed. She started, gazed for a few seconds, and then, having convinced herself of

my identity, regarded me with an inexpressible stare of astonishment and indignation. At length she exclaimed,

“Fitz-Wiggins!”

The peculiarity of this rencontre did not escape the attention of those near us; and, on regaining my senses, I observed people casting inquiring looks alternately at Lady Jellico and myself. I took the hint, and before the storm could burst upon me, made my escape, almost overturning several persons in my precipitate retreat. I bolted into the street, and having ran nearly a quarter of a mile, threw myself into a hackney-coach, and drove to my lodging.

CHAPTER XXVII.

I COULD not disguise from myself that this unlucky rencontre was fatal to the plans which I had recently formed, and I dreaded lest I should have involved my good-natured friend and sponsor in my ruin. I wrote him a line expressive of my fears upon this head, and anxiously awaited a visit or communication from him. In the mean time, my mind was occupied with reflections on my folly, and the ill luck which usually accompanies it. Strange to say, it had never occurred to me to apprehend danger from this quarter ; I had, in fact, forgotten the Jellicos and their city connection. Oh, how I cursed the day when I was tempted to become a Bath-beau ! how I loathed the sight of the fine clothes upon which I had so plumed myself (shortsighted mortal !) the

preceding evening ! Tibbetts arrived late in the afternoon, and in his sorrowful visage I read the confirmation of my worst fears as far as self was concerned.

“ I know what has happened,” cried I ; “ I have been proclaimed an impostor and a swindler. My business is settled. My only fear is lest you should have suffered on my account.”

This Tibbetts denied ; but in such a hesitating way, that I insisted on knowing the truth. He then admitted that he had been a good deal embarrassed by what had happened, but assured me that he had no apprehension of any serious damage accruing to himself in consequence.

“ But Lady Tott,” said I, “ how did you explain matters to her ? ”

“ As soon as that confounded old hag, who I wish had been——but it’s no use swearing——as soon as she split upon you, my lady, who overheard it all, turned ~~slap~~ round upon me, and with a devil of a frown, ordered me to call upon her the first thing in the morning ;

then, in a whisper, she desired me to hold my tongue and say nothing, as she would be the first to know the 'rights of it. That I might be able to obey these commands, I thought it best to be off, which I did as soon as I could, promising Hudson to give him a satisfactory explanation ; though how I should perform my promise, hang me if I knew. However, this morning, I waited on my lady ; and as it was no use trying to humbug her, you know, I told your whole story. She laughed heartily at it, I can tell you, and said you must be a monstrous clever chap. She desired me to leave the thing entirely to her, and did not doubt that, by telling lots of lies, she should be able to get me out of the mess, free from taint. But," he added, and his voice and countenance fell ominously, " my dear fellow, she exacted one promise from me."

He hesitated, and guessing what this promise was, I was willing to spare him the pain of disclosing it. " I understand," said I, " she has insisted upon your breaking off all intercourse with me ?"

Tibbetts was silent.

“I could expect no less,” I replied; “it is absolutely necessary that it should be so. Your friendship could now be no longer of any use to me, and might materially injure yourself. I only rejoice that you are not likely to suffer from it, as it is.”

“It was only in that view that I was brought to consent to it,” said poor Tibbetts; “if it would have been any use to you my standing out, dash me if I would not have cut the concern altogether rather than hand a friend over.”

I cordially assured him of my belief in his sincerity; and, to avoid this unpleasant topic, begged him to relate what had passed after my abrupt departure from Mr. Hudson’s house. “Tell me everything,” said I, “for I can bear it.”

At my repeated instance he described the scene, at first reluctantly, but afterwards with a liveliness agreeable to his inherent sense of the humorous, which the sober habits of his maturer years had not materially deadened.

It seemed that Lady Jellico had exposed me in an unmerciful manner, extenuating nothing and setting down much in malice. She vehemently protested that she had from the first seen through my pretensions, and had warned her friends and acquaintance to keep me at a distance. She alluded with great indignation to my audacious presumption in aspiring to the hand of one of her daughters ; and scrupled not to assert that she had repelled my advances with scorn and contempt, appealing to Sir Joseph on one side, and Miss Anna Maria on the other, for a confirmation of her statement, which neither had the courage nor honesty to contradict. She quoted and commented with much bitterness upon my, alas ! empty boast of "birth, family, and fashion" — the allusion to my pseudo-ancestor, Sir Hugh Fitz-Wiggins ; nor did any impertinence of which I had been guilty, within her cognizance, escape her tenacious malignity. Tibbetts left her still holding forth upon the subject, and subsequently learned that other persons came forward, professing to be acquainted with my

proceedings at Bath ; and concurred in representing me, on the authority of their respective friends and acquaintance who had seen me there, to have been a suspected person from the first hour of my appearance at that place ; and, consequently, that no one was surprised at my turning out to be an impostor.

What a fund of dormant discrimination must have been developed by that discovery ! for, certainly, if my reception in the circles of Bath was of a questionable character, I never perceived it ; let the reader judge, for I have given a veracious history of my adventures at that place.

I did not take leave of Tibbetts without considerable emotion ; and that good soul himself was, as he phrased it, “ terribly cut up about it.” He assured me, however, that he reserved to himself the hope of being useful to me when this affair should have blown over ; but his manner did not indicate that this hope was a very sanguine one. He laid his injunctions upon me to employ his friendly offices, if ever they should at any time, in any way, be avail-

able. He desired me to communicate my present plans as soon as they were formed ; and to advise him, from time to time by letter, how I was going on.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A FEW hours after Tibbetts had left me, I received a letter from him, enclosing a bank-bill for fifty pounds, in case I should be short of cash, and desiring me to return it only when quite convenient to do so, which he hoped, for my own sake, might be soon; but, as far as he was concerned, it was immaterial when I repaid him. I could not but appreciate the delicacy with which he offered a gift in the shape of a loan; but I was a stranger to the captious pride which would render me reluctant to receive a favour from anybody who might be disposed to lay me under obligation. I therefore thankfully accepted this boon, which relieved me from the immediate pressure of pecuniary distress.

I was, for many days, in a state of indecision

with respect to my future plans. My heart sickened at the thoughts of beginning servitude *de novo* ; but every other respectable line for which my education and capacity fitted me, required character and references, which I was unable to command. Nevertheless, that I might not reproach myself with having patiently sat down under my misfortunes, I made several attempts to procure employment ; but while my personal qualifications were admitted in every instance, my application was dismissed, when I shrunk from investigation into my former life.

I remained concealed in London nearly a twelvemonth ; and then, when my resources were exhausted, found myself reduced to the last resort of seeking a menial service. Even this humble office I did not obtain without difficulty ; and was at last compelled, for bread, to take a single-handed place in the suburbs, where, in addition to my in-door duties, I had to “look after” a horse and chaise, and was expected to lend a hand in the garden when I could spare time from my regular work !

In this Protean capacity of alternate footman, gardener, groom, I actually managed to exist some months, and only left it to "better" myself by taking a place as footman only; but where I had to attend on nine young ladies and gentlemen, besides my master and mistress. This situation, as may be imagined, was a fine school for temper and patience. Here, also, I got rid of my gentlemanlike maladies, the fruit of luxury and indolence. Frugal fare and everlasting activity could not consist with bile and dyspepsia. Frequently I have been summoned simultaneously by a house and door-bell, and two voices screaming. "Simon!" from different parts of the mansion. I endured all this, wondering, at the same time, at that mysterious principle which could attach me to life upon such terms. But I was become quite a sober, rational, character; the reverses that I had experienced had completely disgusted me with high life; and I made a vow never again to be seduced by its delusive brilliancy, never to serve people of fashion, nor to become a man of fashion myself. Pursuant to this resolution

I sold all the emblems of my foppery, my fine coats, waistcoats, hosiery, &c. My trinkets, consisting of chains, rings, brooches, pins, not excepting the gold watch which had been given me by Lord Leighton, and a small token of affection presented me by Julia Peck. The last article, though valued only at tenpence by the sordid and unsentimental huckster, I suffered to go, in accordance with my resolution to keep no memento of times which I wished to bury in oblivion.

Being resolved to lay a solid foundation for a new character, I persevered in this miserable service for a twelvemonth, and then succeeded in advancing myself another stage. I was hired by a gentleman under peculiar circumstances. He was the eldest son of a squire of good family and large fortune lately deceased ; but had been disinherited by his father in consequence, it was said, of the machinations of a young stepmother, who sought to gain the estate for her child, an infant of two years old, and who had actually been left heir, to the prejudice of his elder brother.

Mr. Everard, which was my new master's name, sought to set aside his father's will, on the ground of undue influence, and was engaged in collecting evidence to support his plea. He was a young man of very amiable manners, of an anxious and ardent temper, and very much enamoured. This last circumstance was the cause of the exertions which he was making to gain possession of his rightful inheritance ; for upon his accomplishment of this object depended whether (in the language of lovers) his future existence was to be happy or miserable. The principals were, of course, above all such sordid considerations ; but the parents of the young lady did not esteem a match of four hundred pounds per annum (which was all his father's liberality had left Mr. Everard) an eligible match for their daughter ; and had, therefore, under existing circumstances, peremptorily forbidden his addresses. These particulars I gathered from the lips of my gentleman himself.

He was, at this time, busied with the lawyers, endeavouring to build up a case to invalidate his father's will. His best proof, however,

was of a negative character; it could not be made to appear, nor had it been pretended by the old gentleman, that his first-born had ever given him any serious cause of offence; the only reason assigned by him for the act of injustice which he had perpetrated, was a preference to the offspring of the second marriage. Still Mr. Everard, senior, had been an eccentric person in his general habits; and counsel held out hopes that this fact, coupled with the unjustifiable postponement of the elder to the younger branch of the half-blood, might set aside the will. Mr. Everard was, therefore, strongly advised to collect all the strange anecdotes which he could scrape together of his father's singularities, with the view of converting them into evidence of his unsoundness of mind. To assist him in this pious project, Mr. Everard had engaged me; my late master, who was his solicitor, having recommended me to him as an active and intelligent person. This, I need hardly say, was an employment quite suited to my genius, and I entered into it with great alacrity.

There was only one drawback, which was an apprehension lest I should again fall in with some of my Bath acquaintances, for we were immediately setting off to try whether we could get any aid from a maternal uncle of Mr. Everard's who was sojourning in that neighbourhood, at one of those small places where the happy people who have nothing else to do, but take care of their health, and spend their annuities, are wont to resort, during the autumnal equinox, to drink fetid hot water, and take airings in pony chaises.

But this danger was not sufficient to deter me from the expedition, as, being upon my guard, I should hope to be able to avoid any untoward encounter.

The gentleman we were about to visit was one with whom the gentle reader is already slightly acquainted, Sir Benjamin Moody, by whom it may be remembered I was so discourteously received, when, at the commencement of my career, I applied for the vacant situation of his valet. I mentioned this circumstance to Mr. Everard, who was much

amused at it, and informed me that his uncle was generally considered a very ill-natured and disagreeable person, and much shunned by his family on that account. He added, "I have not seen him myself since I was a schoolboy, but he occasionally visited my father, who courted him for the sake of his wealth, of which he hoped to be left heir. But he is such a cynic, I should not wonder if he were to cut out all his relatives, and bequeath it to the national debt, which I believe he declares to be his intention. I understand that of late he has become a confirmed valetudinarian, fancying himself to be the depositary of all the diseases of which the human frame is susceptible. This, I suppose, does not improve his temper. I fear we shall find it a hard matter to get anything out of him, though I know he was in the habit of saying openly, that my father was as mad as a fool could be. I must be cautious not to let him know what is my object, or he will disappoint me out of sheer spleen."

CHAPTER XXIX.

WHEN we arrived at our place of destination, which I shall call —— Spa, we took up our quarters at the boarding-house, where we had learned that Sir Benjamin was sojourning. It was my master's intention to meet his uncle

expected rencontre, he hurried into an explanation of his visit to ——, which he attributed to a want of change of air, and his inability, from straitened circumstances, to sojourn at a more fashionable watering-place. Sir Benjamin answered to all this only with a “humph!” and without affecting to return his nephew’s compliments, he drily extended a finger to the proffered hands of Mr. Everard, and observed,

“Your father cut you off with an annuity, did he not? What did he leave you?”

My master answered in a low, confidential tone,

“Only four hundred a-year, charged upon the estate which he has left to my brother—to Mrs. Everard’s son!”

“Ho! ho!” chuckled the baronet. My master, who neither enjoyed the joke, nor was at all disposed to discuss his private affairs in the presence of some twenty or thirty strangers—company at the boarding-table of a third-rate watering-place—moved towards a more secluded part of the room; but dinner being at the moment brought in, Sir Benjamin hastened to the

table to take his place, laughing, and exclaiming aloud,

“ A fellow who was bred to an estate of six thousand a-year, cut off with three or four hundred ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! Ho ! ho ! ho ! ”

My master, annoyed and disgusted almost beyond his capacity of endurance, bit his lip, and seated himself at the table opposite his uncle, willing, for the present, to let the subject drop. But Sir Benjamin, as soon as he had finished his soup, returned to the charge.

“ I always thought your father an infernal ass, but hang me if I'm not half inclined to change my opinion.”

“ At all events, sir, we had better discuss that point another time,” said Mr. Everard, casting a significant glance at the company, who were beginning to look exceedingly edified by these singular disclosures of facts and opinions. Sir Benjamin, however, without noticing, or choosing to notice the hint, continued in an ironical sarcastic style,

“ What a fortunate thing for a young fellow of your talents and address to have the world

before you, instead of being overlaid at the outset of life with the dead-weight of riches! Who would not prefer the excitement of enterprise, to the sameness of a life which knows neither hope nor fear? Of what use would it have been to you to waste the midnight oil at Oxford and Lincoln's Inn, had you come into six thousand a-year at five-and-twenty? *Now*, with great luck, and unremitting application, you may, in thirty years time, look to be Lord Chancellor! I consider you a young man very much to be felicitated;—don't you think he is, marm?" addressing himself to an old lady who sat near him, and had been listening with the greatest appearance of interest to his discourse.

Perceiving my master's temper rapidly giving way under the consolatory eloquence of his uncle, I watched my opportunity, and ventured to give him an admonitory glance from the sideboard, just as a retort was rising to his lips. Mr. Everard swallowed his bile and a large glass of sherry. Whether it was that the asperity of Sir Benjamin's humour was

mitigated by my master's forbearance, or that he was tired of the subject, I will not say, but he left poor Mr. Everard to finish his dinner in peace, and amused himself during the remainder of the meal, by showing up the infirmities, or peculiarities, which his malignant penetration had discovered in any of the people present. This annoyance was submitted to in every instance, with more or less patience. He was considered a privileged person ; a convenient character, which may be acquired by anybody who is sufficiently endowed with wit or impudence, to take out a diploma for the practice of impertinence or immorality.

CHAPTER XXX.

WHEN I attended my gentleman at night, the bile which had been excited by, but suppressed in the presence of, his uncle, at once broke out with great bitterness. I suffered, and even encouraged him to relieve his overcharged breast, by copious imprecations, and when I judged him capable of listening to cool reason, I ventured to remonstrate against the order which, in the height of his passion, he had given me to pack up for departure the following morning. My opposition to his will was, however, somewhat premature, for it produced a relapse of his wrath which now fell upon my own head in a volley of curses and vituperative epithets for my insolence in presuming to intrude my advice and question his orders; and he swore that he would pay me off the next morn-

ing. I permitted this tirade likewise to spend itself; and then calmly, but firmly, renewed my attempt to divert from his hasty purpose this impetuous young man. Perseverance and moderation, as usual, prevailed over capricious fury.

“Why, you infernal fool and rascal!” cried he, “what is the good of staying here to be ridiculed and insulted, I should like to know?”

“Sir,” answered I immediately, profiting by this evidence of returning reason, “permit me to answer your question by another. Did you ever hear of any person succeeding in any enterprise who was daunted by the first difficulties he encountered?”

“Confound you for an impertinent coxcomb! What the devil would you have me do, then?”

“As you allow me, sir, to offer my humble opinion, I would respectfully suggest that, as we have come here purposely to try what can be made of Sir Benjamin, and as he *might* be of essential service to us, it would not be

advisable to be deterred by a little roughness of manner."

"Roughness of manner!" cried Mr. Everard, "I'll trouble you indeed! I defy flesh and blood to stand such malice and brutality. He is the damnedst—"

"Be it so," interrupted I, gently *waving* him to silence with my hand; "your patience and forbearance, sir, may wear out your uncle's satire and rudeness. At all events, I submit it is surely worth the trial. Besides, sir, I apprehend that you have no reason to suppose that this unamiable character in Sir Benjamin extends beyond the surface. It is to be presumed, until you have proof to the contrary, that so near a relative would not wish you to suffer substantial wrong, and it is hardly possible that he should not be well aware of the circumstances under which you have been deprived of your inheritance."

This reasoning had its due weight with Mr. Everard. He paused a few seconds thoughtfully, and then said, "I believe you are right, Wiggins, and certainly it is worth the trial."

After all, why should I be annoyed by the spleen of an old misanthrope whom nobody minds. Wiggins, you're a damned sensible fellow. I was wrong in abusing you as I did, and I'm sorry for it."

"Oh, sir," said I, spreading my hand upon my bosom and bowing to the ground, "say no more upon the subject. When a gentleman acknowledges himself to have been in the wrong, he has made abundant reparation. Everything that you may have said unpleasant to my feelings is from this moment obliterated from my memory. Have you any further commands for me to-night, sir?"

My gentleman answered in the negative, and as I withdrew I heard him mutter, "Infernal coxcomb!" I smiled, as I could make allowance for the vexation of spirit which must be felt at succumbing to the superior genius of a dependant. This was only human nature.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THENCEFORWARD, the gentle reader will not be surprised to learn that Mr. Everard was almost wholly guided in the management of this delicate affair by the humble individual who beguiles some of the tedious hours of his retirement from active life by enditing these trivial pages. My gentleman, indeed, was constantly in want of my encouragement and support under the fire of Sir Benjamin's wit, which he found almost insupportable. He was, moreover, distracted by his unfortunate attachment, the fair object of which he learned was now staying, for change of air, with a relative whose residence was only some two or three miles from the watering-place where we were sojourning, and, therefore, as Mr. Everard inferred (somewhat violently perhaps), suffering in health from the obstacles to their union.

This intelligence rendered my master almost unmanageable ; it was not without the greatest difficulty that I could restrain him from throwing himself at the feet of his beloved, and urging her to an immediate union, regardless of everything but the blind dictates of passion. All my influence could only exact from him a promise to refrain from any decisive measure for a week. He insisted, however, upon immediately making known to her his being in the neighbourhood, and the unalterable state of his affections. To this I consented, on condition that I should be the bearer of his communication, and that he would trust implicitly to my fidelity and discretion.

Always ready to turn my hand to anything, I undertook without diffidence the not very easy task of interposing between the impetuous desires of two devoted hearts. But I was peculiarly qualified to discharge this painful duty with delicacy, for, alas ! I could enter into their feelings. My own bowels had experienced the sharp pang of disappointed love ; and though time had in a great measure closed

my wound, yet memory would oftentimes dwell with sadness upon those happy days when I yielded to the delicious but dangerous intoxication. The service upon which I was at present bound naturally recalled these melancholy passages in my eventful career, and as I wended my solitary way towards Mount Pleasant, the abode of Mr. Everard's mistress, my mind dwelt on, my once (and still) beloved Julia. I pictured her (torturing idea!) the property of the nauseous Le Beau, perhaps condemned to propagate the image of that vile caricature of humanity! Conjecture was, indeed, left to roam almost at large respecting her fate; for during some five years which had elapsed since we parted, I had heard nothing of her: I only knew that Lady Leighton had passed from the protection of Colonel Calloway to that of a baronet; and when I last heard of her, was residing at Vienna, the gayest of the gay. But whether Julia had followed her fortunes, or adhered to those of Monsieur Le Beau, I could not ascertain. Perhaps that fair form might now be mouldered into dust.—How

deeply did I repent the levity which had lost me the esteem of that sweet creature ! How much mortification and disappointment might I have been spared had I united my fate with hers ! What happiness might we not have enjoyed, retired from servitude in some elegant, light business, (for I could not bear to think that my delicate Julia should be engaged in any coarse sordid trade,) which her grace might have adorned, and my talents improved. But it was idle now to calculate upon lost opportunities. I, therefore, drove the subject from my thoughts, and as I found myself to be within a quarter of an hour's walk of my destination, I thought it high time to prepare myself for the delicate affair in hand.

According to Mr. Everard's instructions, I was to endeavour to put myself in communication with Miss Fancourt's maid, who was in her confidence, and through this channel to convey his letter, which, if sent direct, might defeat his object ; as he had reason to believe that her aunt, Mrs. Wilmot, with whom the young

lady was on a visit, was highly adverse to the connexion, and would intercept any correspondence between the lovers. My gentleman had been greatly puzzled to find expedients by which I might procure an interview with the Abigail, but I desired him to make himself easy, and to leave all to me. I went to work, as was my fashion, in a straightforward manner, and walking up to the back entrance of the house, requested to speak to Mrs. Edwards, if she was disengaged, and lest she might receive me before witnesses, desired the footboy, who took my message, to acquaint her that I had particular business. She took the hint, and I was in a few minutes ushered into a private room, where I found Mrs. Edwards awaiting my approach.

We immediately recognized each other as old acquaintances. I had known her in Lord Leighton's time as a Miss Parsons, in waiting upon a married sister of his Lordship's, although she was not exactly of our set, having been considered rather a dowdy. She recollected me

immediately, and uttered an exclamation of surprise at my unexpected appearance.

“Bless me!” she cried; “can’t be Mr. Wiggins?”

“The same, madam, at your service,” answered I, stepping up, and taking her hand with my usual ease and self-possession. “Give me leave to express my pleasure at finding that you have changed your name, which I have no doubt is a subject of congratulation.”

The lady blushed and smiled, and informed me that she had been united about two years, to a young man of good property, and great moral worth, foreman to a silversmith, with whom he shortly expected to be admitted into partnership, until which event she proposed continuing in service; that she had one child, a fine boy a twelvemonth old,” &c.

I listened to a somewhat tedious history of the good woman’s private affairs, with great attention and apparent interest, and gratified her curiosity in return, by such few particulars of my own history, since Lord Leighton’s death, as I thought proper to communicate. This

led to my present business, which having broached in a few words,

“Now, my dear madam,” said I, “you will, I think, agree with me, that these young people ought not to be allowed to rush headlong on their own destruction.”

“I’m quite of your way of thinking, Mr. Wiggins. But, my dear sir, you’d like something after your walk? I believe I’ve got a biscuit and a drop of Hollands, in the room.” And she forthwith opened, with a very particular key, a small closet, and in a twinkling produced a plate of cakes, a good-sized stone bottle, lemon, sugar, and tumblers.

“I hope you’ll find that Hollands to your liking, sir; for my part, I’m no judge of spirits, but the faculty particularly order it to me, though I can’t abide it myself.” So saying she mixed herself an exceeding stiff glass. I could do no less than follow her example; and, having done so, I resumed the subject of my embassy.

“As I was saying, Mrs. Edwards, I think it is our duty, connected as we are with these

young people, to do all in our power to put off this match, until we see what is likely to come to pass. Everard, at present, has only four hundred pounds per annum, and his prospects, in my opinion, are more than doubtful."

"And Georgiana," said Mrs. Edwards, "is entirely in her father's power, who, poor man, has barely two thousand a-year, two other girls, and an extravagant son to provide for; so that he could do very little for her, even if he was to give his consent. If they were to marry now, I doubt if they would be able to make up five hundred a-year betwixt them; perfect beggary, you know. To be sure, she has expectations from her aunt here; but then there's no placing any dependence upon them old maids. Why, I remember a circumstance—"

"True, true," interrupted I, seeing that the good woman was about to digress; "but I understand that the only objection which your people have to my young friend is the want of the needful?"

"Oh, surely!" was the reply; "there can

be no other objection in the world to Mr. Everard. He is of very good family, and a very quiet, respectable sort of young man, I am told."

"Oh, yes!" said I, "he's very well; a good-natured, well-disposed lad, not exactly calculated for a Thames incendiary, ha! ha! but just the stuff to make a good husband."

"Ah, Mr. Wiggins!" said the lady, shaking her head with matronly reprobation, "just as great a rake as ever, I see; but your turn will come by and by. However, as I was saying, you think there isn't much chance for Everard recovering his father's property?"

"Whatever chance there may be," I replied, "it would be madness to encourage this match on any such speculation. I propose, therefore, that we break it off at once. I will get my youngster away from this neighbourhood as quickly as I can, and marry him to the first tolerable fortune I can find, which will be the best way of settling the business for both parties. The chief difficulty is to prevent their meeting at present, and to ac-

complain this, I must be beholden to your valuable assistance, my dear madam."

"Oh, to be sure, we mustn't allow that, by no means ! But, my dear Mr. Wiggins, we had better not take any precipitous measures. If we can keep 'em from the sight of each other, there can be no occasion for marrying either of 'em, you know ; and, at all events, afore we think of that, we may as well stop and see what the lawyers are likely to do for young Everard. If he should gain the day, there's nobody I should prefer for my Georgiana. His property is within a few miles of Bath, where Mr. Edwards is serving his time ; so it would be quite the thing for me. Besides, it goes to one's heart to cross the poor things' inclinations, unless—"

"Unless the imperative calls of duty and interest oblige one to do so," answered I, perceiving the error into which I had fallen by being over communicative, and relapsing immediately into diplomatic dissimulation. "I see that I was hasty in my views. We will proceed with caution ; but, mean time, we must

settle the point which presses, namely, intercepting the communication of this enamoured pair. See, here is a letter he has charged me with. I was obliged to undertake it, to prevent his coming in person, which might have played the devil. (Excuse me.) My honour is pledged that the letter should be delivered; I must trust to your excellent sense and judgment, my dear friend, to guard against any mischievous consequences which might result from it."

"You may rely upon it, that your confidence shall not be abused," answered the lady, placing the despatch in her bosom. "I shall give Georgiana the letter, and, at the same time, secretly inform Mrs. Wilmot that her niece is in contraband correspondence with Mr. Everard. Consequently I shall be praised, and, perhaps, rewarded for my fidelity, and be doing the poor child a service all the time. We shall of course be sent home directly, which I shan't at all regret; for this is a very middling sort of establishment, I'll assure you, Mr. Wiggins. There's no second table, nor

wine, in the housekeeper's-room, which is a thing I'm not at all accustomed to."

I failed not to express the due degree of sympathy with this grievance, and business being despatched, we discussed a little gossip, which brought us insensibly to the end of the stone bottle. I then took my leave, after having exchanged with Mrs. Edwards assurances of high consideration, and of mutual attachment to each other's interests.

CHAPTER XXXII.

I FOUND Mr. Everard awaiting my return with the usual impatience of a lover. I informed him, without entering into particulars, that I had had a satisfactory interview with the young lady's Abigail, in whose trusty hands I had deposited his billet. This was so far excellent; but when he found that I had left the house, without bringing a line, or even a message, from his beloved, he flew into a rage, and abused me for leaving half my task undone. Before, however, I could justify myself, with the caprice of his malady, he begged my pardon, admitted that he was hasty, and that he believed I had acted with delicacy and discretion. This idea I took care to confirm; and comforted him by the assurance that he would, in all probability, receive a

communication from Mount Pleasant before the day closed. The event verified my prediction ; for the same evening, a messenger from Mount Pleasant brought two letters, the one from Miss Fancourt, the other from her aunt. The former was, no doubt, written with all the fervour of penniless and thwarted love ; for Mr. Everard devoured it with enraptured eyes, as if it had contained an order for a thousand pounds. The other epistle, which I was permitted to peruse, was of a less agreeable character. It was a severe reproof from the old lady, for what she termed his ungentlemanly conduct, in taking advantage of the circumstance of her niece being under her roof to re-open a correspondence (which she had accidentally discovered,) with her, after his addresses had been formally dismissed by the young lady's father. Mrs. Wilmot added, that it was her intention to send her niece home the following day, but, with the view of sparing her feelings, she meant to suppress the cause of her taking this step ; and trusted, in conclusion, that Mr. Everard would see the pro-

priety of desisting from a pursuit which could only end in ruin to both parties.

These contradictory letters placed my poor gentleman, whose resolution was none of the strongest, in a sad dilemma, and it devolved upon me, as might have been expected, to decide what line of conduct he should take. After half an hour, partly spent in swearing his determination to carry off and marry his Georgiana, in spite of all the fathers and aunts in the universe, and partly in cursing his deceased parent's unnatural weakness, which had deprived him of the means of gratifying his matrimonial views, he bewailed himself as the most miserable fellow on the face of the earth, and, in an agony of doubt, asked me for my opinion and advice. I was prepared with both. I appealed to the weakest of his weak points ; one upon which, like most people who have no great personal merit to rely upon, he was particularly tenacious—family pride. I represented to him how derogatory it would be to force him into a family which declined his connexion. This instantly touched him ;

he started, bit his lip, and in a soliloquy, reminded himself that Mr. Fancourt's grand-sire had been a grocer. I then quitted that point, and appealing to a better feeling, painted to him the privations to which, with his narrow means, a union with Miss Fancourt, at present, must expose her, who had been habituated from her cradle to every comfort and even luxury. To his credit be it spoken, Mr. Everard's feelings responded with equal sensibility to this chord ; so, following up the advantage I had gained, I told him, in strong terms, that, under existing circumstances, he ought not to renew his addresses to the young lady. He listened with sorrowful conviction, and bound himself by his word of honour to do nothing more in this affair, while his present situation remained unaltered.

A few days after this conversation, a circumstance occurred very apposite to the views, with regard to my worthy young gentleman, which I had hinted to Mrs. Edwards; and which, it will be recollected, did not appear to be coincident with those entertained by that

prudent person. The circumstance I allude to was the arrival at — Spa of nothing less than an heiress, reputed at the lowest estimate at a hundred thousand pounds, and who actually appeared to be, on the strictest examination of her domestics, worth half that sum. Now I thought this would be no bad speculation for young Everard, and I considered that he might enter upon it with a very fair chance of success. He was young, penniless, good-looking, not over-burdened with wit, which would probably be a recommendation to Miss Greenfield; for your women of fortune, being generally clever, do not affect partners who resemble them in that particular. Besides, my young friend had in his style another quality which I have observed to be not unacceptable to heiresses; viz. a considerable spice of the tiger.

Mr. Everard was, according to the common suffrage, a very gentleman-like young man; but with a fine figure, and good address, he had not that indescribable something which is to be found in persons who belong to good

company. He was conspicuous, without being distinguished, in his appearance. His profuse locks of auburn hair were too carefully arranged ; his cravat was just too elaborate ; his coat, *too well made* ; his vest, too gay ; in a word, the tailor was a rival to Nature, instead of being her modest and faithful minister. However, Mr. Everard was a very handsome young fellow, and by nineteen people out of twenty, in the circle in which he moved, would, no doubt, have been considered a very fine gentleman ; certainly he had better pretensions than any other man at —— Spa, and as I really wished the lad well — for I need hardly say, that no selfish views could be gratified by the situation of major-domo in a matrimonial establishment of two thousand pounds per annum — I determined to do my best in his behalf.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

My match-making plan had nearly been frustrated in the outset by the indiscreet co-operation of Sir Benjamin Moody. The same idea, it seemed, had occurred to the worthy baronet, but, instead of delicately insinuating it to his nephew, he went to work in his usual coarse manner, by recommending him in plain terms to make up to the heiress. All he constant lover swelled in Mr. Everard's breast at this rude and disloyal proposal; but unwilling that his tender secret should be communicated to such an uncongenial bosom, he suppressed the rising sigh, and courteously but peremptorily declined Sir Benjamin's advice. The shrewdness of the Baronet would have detected the cause of this refusal had he not been already acquainted, as was probable, with his

nephew's unfortunate amour ; and it was not to be expected, from his unmerciful temper, that he would allow the poor youth to escape without tormenting him upon the subject.

“Thy exquisite reason, good youth,” said he, fixing his satirical eye on the blushing, unsteady countenance of his nephew.

“I have no exquisite reason,” answered the victim sulkily, and perhaps unconsciously following up the quotation of the Baronet from his prototype Sir Toby Belch. “I have no exquisite reason, sir, only I don't want to make up to the heiress, or anybody else.”

“Then why,” rejoined the Baronet — for I should observe, that this conversation took place within earshot of myself and others, — “then why, may I presume to inquire, this investment of capital on the adornment of your person? Why these velvets, and satins, and embroidery, and gold chains, and brass buttons, unless they are to set off that exquisite shape, and render it quite irresistible to some wealthy fair one? Surely you do not come forth so gloriously arrayed to dazzle and destroy the poor damsels.

of the place, the Coxes, the Simpsons, the Hopkineses, and the Figgs?"

"Really, sir," said Everard, very impatiently, "it is extremely unpleasant to have these sort of personal remarks made upon one. I dress to please myself, not to please the damsels, as you call them, either rich or poor. And if you must know the truth, Sir Benjamin, my affections are already unalterably engaged, so I hope you will find some other subject for your wit." So saying, he was about to turn away, but the Baronet had not done with him.

"Your affections unalterably engaged! Oh, I cry you mercy. Is she a *very* large fortune?"

"No, sir."

"Not quite a plum, eh?"

"Not a penny, as far as I know."

Sir Benjamin gazed at his nephew with a look of insufferable derision. "Oh, I understand now. Some slip-slop sentimental miss."

"She is not a slip-slop sentimental miss," vociferated Everard. "She is an angel, nor shall any man speak disrespectfully of her in my presence."

"What is your angel's name?" coolly asked Sir Benjamin.

"Georgiana — Fancourt," answered the enamoured swain, not without some hesitation and misgiving.

"A daughter of old Tom Fancourt?"

"The same."

"I recollect her. She has blue eyes, fair complexion, and rather low in stature?"

"Yes,—exactly," cried Everard, eagerly.

"Ah, I thought as much. I perfectly remember seeing her at her father's house, last year. I heard her sing 'Come live with me and be my love,' or some such thing, with great feeling, suiting the action to the word by casting her large languishing blue eyes towards a confoundedly handsome captain of dragoons, who was hanging over her, red coat, epaulettes, spurs, and all. It was a devilish pretty picture."

Poor Everard started, and turned at this "picture," then stared wistfully at his uncle, to gather, if possible, from his countenance whether his picture was taken from the life,

or only a malicious invention to torment him. But, Sir Benjamin, without moving a muscle or appearing to notice his nephew's emotion, proceeded.

“They said, by the by, that that dragoon fellow had used the girl ill. He almost lived at Fancourt's house, and seemed to have a great deal to say to her. I forget the fellow's title, but he was a lord. Perhaps he was a friend of yours, and in your interest?”

“I know nothing of the matter,” said poor Everard, faintly; and, excusing himself, presently turned away from his uncle, who looked after him for a moment with a self-satisfied chuckle, and then turned upon his heel.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WHEN I next saw my young gentleman after the interview detailed in the last chapter, I found him in great despondency, and it was not long before he related to me in full the conversation which had passed between him and his uncle, the principal part of which I had overheard. He then anxiously asked my opinion as to the authenticity of the story of the dragoon. I was decidedly inclined to think that if not altogether fabulous, it was much exaggerated; but, seeing that a suspicion of his mistress's fidelity might be a material aid to the project which I had formed for his advantage, I artfully contrived that it should not be eradicated from his mind, by affecting to give no credit to what Sir Benjamin had said, and vindicating Miss Fancourt's immutable

constancy by bad argument and feeble assertion. The consequence was, that Mr. Everard, after many bitter reflections on the fickleness of the sex, and maledictions on the supposititious dragoon, ended by being possessed with a belief in the possibility of his mistress's treachery. But lest his uncle should suppose that he had made any impression upon him, or that he paid any deference to his dictation, he adopted sentiments of hatred to the heiress, and resolved to abstain from even common civility towards her, lest it should be interpreted into tender attention. I did not think it prudent at present to oppose this resolution, which gave me no serious apprehension of the failure of my scheme.

The appearance of Miss Greenfield created, of course, a great sensation, as it is called. The young lady was apparently about five-and-twenty, unpretending in her manner, with a lively and good-tempered countenance. She was accompanied by her mother, who seemed to view with uneasiness and dislike every person of the other sex who approached her

precious charge. The family had, up to a recent period, been in narrow circumstances. The father, an artist, had died some few years previously, leaving his widow and daughter almost struggling with want, in which condition they had remained until, one fine morning about a twelvemonth ago, Miss Greenfield received a letter from a solicitor, acquainting her that she was sole heir to the real and personal property of her uncle Mr. Thomas Greenfield deceased. This man, who had made his fortune in a Manchester-house, having never taken the least notice of his brother's family during his lifetime, this bequest was wholly unexpected by them. They were not even aware that he was possessed of wealth, as he was only head clerk in the house at Manchester, and it was not known until his death that he had been personally interested in the concern. The old gentleman, however, ultimately cut up to the amount of nearly sixty thousand pounds. On this change of fortune, Mrs. Greenfield was all for taking a house in London, entering into fashionable company, and

marrying her daughter to a lord. But the young lady herself, with less ambition, and more sense, argued that, though her money might indeed obtain her access to, it could not secure for her an easy footing in, a circle for which neither birth nor education had qualified her. She determined, therefore, notwithstanding all her mamma's persuasives to the contrary, to make the merits of the individual the first consideration in her matrimonial choice, and to attempt nothing so hazardous as a debut in the aristocratic purlieus of St. James's. These particulars, with many others irrelevant to the matter, I gathered from the voluble lips of Miss Greenfield's lady in waiting, who was entirely of the party of the mamma, and greatly lamented and somewhat despised her young friend's want of spirit in resisting the dazzling charms of high life and nobility to which she might aspire.

“What's the use, I should like to know,” cried Miss Penelope Barrett, with the warmth of honest conviction, “of having a matter of three thousand a year unless one makes some

show with it. Do you think if *I* had such a fortune, *I* would come to a nasty, poky place like this? No, indeed !”

Miss Penelope Barrett burned with the desire of belonging to a London establishment, and regarded me with infinite deference when she learned that I had passed so many of my years in high life. I found it well worth my while, in furtherance of the matrimonial scheme upon which I was now intent, to improve this advantage, as Miss Barrett, in addition to the natural and legitimate influence of an Abigail, possessed also that which arose from an acquaintance, commencing at childhood, with her lady. She intimated, indeed, that she was of a much better family than Miss Greenfield, and that it was only owing to one of the blind freaks of Fortune, that their mutual relationship was not reversed. Be that as it might, Miss Penelope was much more sensible of the blind divinity’s caprice than of the many acts of kindness which it incidentally appeared she had experienced : but gratitude is a plant of slow growth in servile bosoms. As soon as

I judged it expedient, I boldly proposed my gentleman to Miss Barrett as a suitor to her young lady. She listened with gravity, and, after a pause, candidly owned that both she and the mamma looked higher for Miss Greenfield. She could not think of letting her go under an honourable or a baronet, at the least. The precarious nature of Mr. Everard's fortune was not so much the object (objection) as his not being of kin to any person of rank. He had no *handle* to his name; he was only a plain mister. This was a formidable obstacle, and it required all my adroitness and eloquence to meet it. I admitted that Mr. Everard was not connected by blood with the aristocracy, but dwelt on his numerous friends and acquaintance in that class, through whose means his wife could not fail to be introduced to the best company. I expatiated on the great superiority of fashion over rank, and exploded the vulgar error that the one constituted any claim to, or secured its possessor admittance into, the other. I illustrated this position by many examples to be seen every day in the *haut ton*

of persons spring from the kennel carefully avoiding contact with others who might be of the blood of the Howards, because the latter were not of the right set. This fact, which was new to the unsophisticated mind of Penelope, caused her greatly to admire, and it was not until I confirmed it by solemn assurances and reference to authorities that she was induced to give it credence. But it made a great impression upon her, and seemed to have almost wrought a revolution in her opinions. "Besides," proceeded I, following up the advantage I had gained, "with Mr. Everard's connexions and talents, and his wife's fortune, why should he not enter upon public life?—why not, as many others, with less than his advantages, have done before him—why not get into parliament, and ultimately be enabled to sell his country for a peerage?"

Miss Penelope Barrett readily admitted the force of this reasoning, and relying on the accuracy of my representations with regard to Mr. Everard, she thought my proposal might be worthy of consideration. I answered with a

shrug that I cared very little about the matter, and that in fact I had spoken without being at all certain whether or not Mr. Everard would enter into my views, and that if I were to state my candid opinion, I should say it would be a better thing for the young lady than for him; as I had no doubt—indeed, if I were at liberty to compromise third parties, I might say, I was quite sure that he could command a better fortune, though I was free to confess, not so nice a young lady, any day in the week. Miss Barrett declared she would lose no time in bestirring herself in the business.

CHAPTER XXXV.

WHILE these negotiations were going forward so smoothly below stairs, I was not altogether dissatisfied with the aspect of affairs above. Miss Greenfield had begun to show symptoms of pique at Mr. Everard's marked neglect of her, while every other beau in the place was besieging her with his anxious civilities and attentions. My worthy young gentleman, amongst his other foibles, was not altogether free from personal vanity, as the sagacious reader may have already suspected from the mention I have made of the attention which he paid to his exterior; and when I ventured to hint to him that the great magnet of attraction was disconsolate at his neglect, he was not displeased; on the con-

trary, he expressed his regret that he should have been considered remiss, and declared that he would take an early opportunity of making his amende. The consequence was, that, when they next met, he laid himself out to please Miss Greenfield, and evidently succeeded so well, that the next evening he never left her side.

From that time the flirtation went on so prosperously that I had nothing to do but to fold my arms and look on. The lady soon became, to the satisfaction of all observers, considerably smitten with my young gentleman, and I began to suspect that his fidelity to Georgiana was a good deal shaken. Meantime Miss Barrett had apprized me that, in case the thing was brought to bear, no opposition would be made by Mrs. Greenfield ; who, though she would have preferred a certainty, yet was so well satisfied with Mr. Everard's prospects as represented by me, that she would not withhold her consent, in the event of her daughter fixing her affections upon him. It was pretty clear, therefore, that the only party

whose acquiescence remained to be secured, was that of the gentleman.

Now this was the critical stage of the business. If there was any appearance of tardiness and reluctance on the part of Mr. Everard, the scheme might be in imminent danger; for, however fond and gentle and good-tempered Miss Greenfield might be, it was not to be expected she would forget that she was an heiress, and therefore entitled to a degree of alacrity and ardour which an undowered damsel might perhaps dispense with. Nor, though I believed my young friend to be somewhat taken with the compound attractions of Miss Greenfield, was I at all sure that he would be induced to break his former engagements.

It must be recollected that he was only three-and-twenty, a time of life at which young gentlemen are apt to take the imaginative rather than the sober serious view of life, and even to prefer the fleeting charms of bright eyes and sylphid forms to the permanent attractions of a good annual income, as the *materiel* of happiness. A feeling of honour

also, which, at a later period, is commonly dropped as romantic and inconvenient, is apt, at this tender age, to be a restraint.

I knew that it would be no easy task to overcome this prejudice in my young friend, and that any premature or rude attempt to remove it might be the ruin of our hopes and wishes; but the ill-natured story of Sir Benjamin had sunk deep into his mind, and I found that he had thought it worth his while to ascertain upon what foundation it rested. It turned out to be substantially true, and Mr. Everard's jealous feelings were highly excited. He had learned, moreover, that Miss Fancourt's state of health and habits were not at all consistent with those of disappointed and desponding love. He heard of no loss of appetite — no delicacy of complexion — no languor of spirits; on the contrary, she was reported to be eating, drinking, talking, walking, riding, and singing, just as much as ever, and in perfect bloom of beauty.

This mortifying intelligence Mr. Everard could not help communicating to me in the bitterness of his soul. I seized the oppor-

tunity, and boldly told him that it was beneath a gentleman of his figure and accomplishments to bewail on such an occasion; that he should wish the young lady a better taste and every happiness, and dismiss her from his thoughts. Finding my counsel not ill received, and seeing no cause to doubt that this attachment rested on surer ground than that which is the basis of most love affairs, namely vanity, I ventured to name to him another lady more worthy of his affections, and infinitely more eligible than Miss Fancourt in respect of worldly circumstances.

“ You will pardon me, sir,” said I, “ for presuming to suggest this to you ; but the truth is, the lady’s partiality is notorious to the whole place. In fact, sir, it is impossible for a person of any observation to doubt that Miss Greenfield is over head and ears in love with you. You are aware, sir, that public rumour gives her credit for a large fortune ; and seeing how matters were inclined, and in case you should have any thoughts that way, I made it my business to inquire what the

real state of Miss Greenfield's affairs might be. As far as I have been able to make out, and I believe my information to be tolerably correct, her property, in the whole, may be valued at sixty-two thousand pounds, or thereabouts. In the first place, there is a freehold estate in Berks, with a good house upon it; a beautiful place, in fact, where Mr. Greenfield himself used to live (the old gentleman from whom the fortune came), and now let to a mercantile gentleman for eight hundred pounds a year. Then there's the share in the house at Manchester, which sold for four-and-twenty thousand six hundred pounds, now invested in the Three per cent Consols. Then, there are shares in the Grand Junction Canal, estimated at about eight thousand pounds; besides which, there is loose property, of which my informant cannot give an accurate account, but which, striking it a low figure, is good for ten thousand pounds more. However, sir, what we have been able to bring to book amounts to upwards of sixty-two thousand pounds, putting the landed property only at twenty-five

years' purchase. I can rely upon my information being correct."

"What is all this d——d nonsense you are talking," said Mr. Everard, who had listened to me with affected indifference; "what have I to do with Miss Greenfield or her fortune; or why should you suppose that she has any fancy for me? I'm sure I've made no attempt to gain her affections. I think," added he, glancing at a swing-glass, and speaking with a mildness of tone and manner not very suitable to the words, "I think you are very impertinent to take such liberties with a young lady's name."

"Oh, sir," answered I with a low bow, and motioning to withdraw, "I humbly beg your pardon; I meant no disrespect to the young lady, nor impertinence to you; but I acknowledge my error, sir; I ask your forgiveness; I will never name the subject again."

"No, no, my good friend, I'm not angry with you; there's no harm in what you've said. But—but, I say, how the devil did you

make out all this? Are you quite sure there's this money?"

"I have not a shadow of a doubt of it, sir; but you know, sir, it would be easy to bring it to a positive certainty by just running up to town, and examining Mr. Greenfield's will at Doctors' Commons."

"Well—eh?—suppose you do?"

"I will go up, sir, by the mail to-night, and, if possible, get down here to-morrow evening." And having inquired if he had any farther commands, I bowed and withdrew.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

BEFORE the following day had closed, I appeared before Mr. Everard with information of a conclusive nature relative to Miss Greenfield's affairs. The will of her uncle, which was drawn up with the precision and perspicuity of business, had been carefully inspected by me; and I had the satisfaction of reporting that it completely corroborated all I had previously learned; the young lady's property appeared even to exceed what it had been represented to me. Mr. Everard expressed himself highly gratified at this result, and commended my address and diligence.

Nothing now seemed wanting to clinch the business but the formal proffer of his hand, which Mr. Everard intimated his intention to make the following day. Accordingly I pre-

pared Miss Greenfield, through the medium of her lady of the bedchamber, for this interesting event, and had the satisfaction of being assured through the same authentic channel, that my young gentleman might expect a most gracious reception. But, alas ! for those who have to do with weak and unstable natures. The conviction or resolution of one moment is frustrated by the accident or caprice of the next. The morning which dawned, big, as I had fondly hoped, with his matrimonial fortune, brought Mr. Everard a letter from his lawyer, announcing a favourable turn in the suit which he was prosecuting with his step-mother. The lady, it seemed, had shown symptoms of shrinking from the threatened investigation with respect to her husband's will, and it was the opinion of his counsel therefrom that terms of compromise, advantageous to his interests, might be obtained, and ought, under the circumstances, to be proposed. This intelligence completely upset and changed Mr. Everard's recently formed plans and prospects. He postponed *sine die* his intended overtures

to Miss Greenfield, and was, all of a sudden, awakened to a sense that his conduct would be exceedingly reprehensible, if he were to contract a new engagement before he had obtained convincing proofs that the fickleness of Miss Fancourt had released him from his former vows.

I heard him in respectful silence, but, disgusted with his levity, inwardly disclaimed all farther interest in his concerns. But on second consideration, not caring to acknowledge myself defeated in a favourite scheme by the perverseness of a young man over whom I was supposed to have perfect control, I informed Miss Penelope Barrett, that, in consequence of unexpected good news received that morning, Mr. Everard had determined to deny himself the happiness of declaring his sentiments to Miss Greenfield at present, with the full expectation that a short delay would enable him to lay the estate of his ancestors at her feet.

Great was the joy expressed by the fair Penelope at Mr. Everard's promised prosperity, as opening to her ambition a more extensive

field of action. She might now hope to vie with the haughtiest Abigails in the land. Town and country houses, — liberal establishments, — first and second tables, — balls and entertainments, all which could hardly be compassed by Miss Greenfield's income, would be easily attainable when she was united to a man of fortune twice the amount of her own ! But was I sure that my gentleman would not be false ? “ You men,” said she, gazing fondly in my face — for, by the way, the poor little thing adored me, I believe, though I could not return her love — “ is such *tratures*.” I pledged myself for my gentleman's fidelity (though if he really recovered his estate, I was by no means clear that it might not suit my book to dispose of him otherwise), and after a tender adieu of Miss Barrett, proceeded to pack up, as we were about to start for London immediately.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ON our arrival in town, Mr. Everard found a letter from his step-mother, the first direct communication which he had received from her since his father's death. She expressed the greatest concern for the unhappy difference which had arisen between them, and her readiness to make any concession rather than the conduct of her late beloved husband should be called in question. She lamented, in most plaintive terms, the unhappy and mistaken prejudice against her, which her step-son had adopted, and to prove to him that he was the object of her most disinterested regard and maternal affection, she offered, without reference to any claims of her own offspring, or the intention of her deceased husband, to place herself unreservedly in his, Mr. Everard's hands,

and to be satisfied with any share, or interest in his father's property, which he might think proper to assign to her and his brother.

. Mr. Everard, notwithstanding the experience he possessed of his amiable mamma, was a good deal moved by this letter, and, in the generosity of his heart, was about to abandon at once all legal proceedings, and to make an adjustment much more in her and her son's favour than his own. He went so far as to reproach himself with having acted harshly, and to fancy that he owed reparation to Mrs. Everard and her son. But, as he mentioned the matter to me, who knew perhaps somewhat more of the world, I strongly dissuaded him from taking any such step, without deliberation and farther inquiry. The inference which I drew from the letter was, that the lady was alarmed, from what cause I did not pretend to divine, but that alarm, and not affection, had prompted her letter. I counselled Mr. Everard most strongly, therefore, to hold no communication with this amiable lady, except through his solicitor, and to abate nothing of his demands.

Hitherto, Mrs. Everard had breathed defiance, and this sudden change of tone appeared to me characteristic of a mean and vulgar nature, which, finding the ground of insolence untenable, passes, at once, to that of fawning adulation. The event justified my discrimination ; and, not to weary the reader's patience with a detail of the circumstances and proceedings which led to the discovery, I will say, in a word, that it was to his uncle, Sir Benjamin Moody, Mr. Everard was indebted for the recovery of his patrimony. That eccentric person had, it proved, been secretly engaged in his nephew's behalf, and by certain clues, held only by himself, had been enabled to trace the scheme of fraud and villany by which it had been attempted to supplant Mr. Everard. He had permitted the wretched woman, and her no less guilty offspring, to make terms for themselves, if they could, and to avoid exposure. They did so ; were liberally provided for by the man they attempted to defraud of his rights, and it was agreed that the secret should be confined to Sir Benjamin,

Mr. Everard, and the guilty parties. Such secrets, however, are not easily confined, and this one, obtaining its liberty, rendered the atmosphere of England no longer wholesome or agreeable to Mrs. Everard and her son. They departed for the Continent, where they long resided, and, for aught I know to the contrary, still live in luxury on the liberality of my worthy gentleman.

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FITZWIGGINS.

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FITZWIGGINS.

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SYDENHAM," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

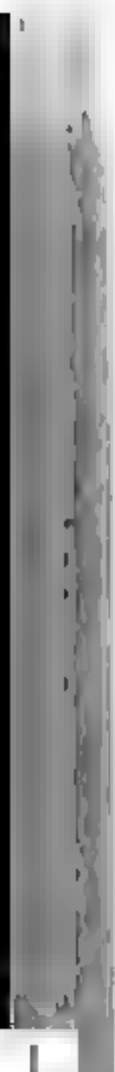
VOL. III.



LONDON:

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1840.



FITZ-WIGGINS.

CHAPTER I.

No sooner was this business brought to a conclusion, than Mr. Everard betook himself to the other, in which he was equally, or, as he would of course have maintained, far more deeply interested ; I mean the inquiry into the state of Miss Fancourt's affections. Here I might make some excellent moral reflections on the short-sightedness of human nature, and the inefficacy of riches to secure happiness. Hitherto, the only apparent bar to Mr. Everard's felicity, seemed to be the want of his estate. Now that he had got it, his mind

was more distracted than ever. He felt himself bound in honour to offer his hand to Miss Fancourt, although, as the reader is aware, his sentiments towards that young lady had lately undergone a change. Independently of the jealousy and suspicion which had been infused into his heart, I had reason to believe that the character and conversation of Miss Greenfield contrasted favourably with those of her rival, and that Mr. Everard had begun to doubt that something more might be requisite to the happiness of a married life, than bright eyes, graceful manners, and superficial accomplishments. At length, after a long fit of moody meditation, he asked me whether I thought a man was freed from his engagements, if he ascertained that his mistress had, in his absence, received the addresses of other suitors? But, not being a proficient in the casuistry of love affairs, I respectfully declined giving an opinion on the point. I did not, however, hesitate to say, that I considered there was no necessity for acting immediately, as the termination of his suit with Mrs. Everard

was not generally known ; and to recommend him to find out what foundation existed for the charge affecting Miss Fancourt's constancy ; and that, if he were satisfied of their truth, I should, were I in his place, at once cut the concern : but, of course, I could not pretend to judge as a gentleman upon the subject.

At this time, the C—— races were about to come off ; and as C—— was within two miles of Mr. Fancourt's residence, no doubt his family would be present, both at the course, and the ball in the evening, which the county were accustomed to attend. To C——, therefore, we repaired ; and, sure enough, among the first persons Mr. Everard recognized on arriving on the ground, was the Fancourt party ; Georgiana herself, conspicuously placed in the grand-stand, looking extremely gay, handsome, and happy, and by her side, in an attitude of devotion, a slight, pale, thoroughbred young man, just the sort of fellow that an absent lover would hardly care to have in attendance upon his mistress. I advised Mr. Everard to keep aloof, and watch the

motions of the unsuspecting pair ; but, scorning as he said to be a spy, he determined to summon courage to try the effect of an unexpected appearance before the volatile young lady. He left me accordingly for that purpose, and I established myself in a position from which I could view the rencontre.

Mr. Everard came upon the party so suddenly, that they were all more or less confused. The mamma seemed to give him a very doubtful reception. The sister bowed with restraint, and held forth, with a sort of demi-cordiality, a single finger. The aristocratic young gentleman drew himself up slightly, and gave the intruder that sort of insolent glance of dislike, which aristocratic youths sometimes bestow upon male strangers. But Miss Georgiana herself started, seemed to utter an ejaculation, cast hurried looks from her lover to the aristocrat, from the aristocrat to her lover, and in her confusion, forgot to take any notice of the latter when he addressed her ! From these phenomena it was not very difficult to draw inferences, and Mr. Everard himself, though not ordinarily quick-sighted, having his organs

sharpened, I suppose, by love and jealousy, put the same construction upon what he saw that I did. After a restrained conversation, of less than five minutes, he made a stiff bow to the Fancourts, and exchanging a most stately inclination of heads with the thorough-bred, quitted the stand, evidently to the relief of the Fancourts. He came back in great fume; told me, with an affectation of glee, that he believed he need be under no farther embarrassment about Miss Georgiana Fancourt, and vehemently declared, that he never was so happy in his life. He then burst into an invective against the sex, and concluded by swearing that he would go to the ball that night, and flirt incessantly with the finest girl in the room, lest Miss Fancourt should, for a moment, suppose that she had jilted him. To support himself in this magnanimous resolve, he swallowed a double quantity of wine at the ordinary, where he had the satisfaction of sitting nearly opposite to Miss Georgiana Fancourt's aristocratic friend, Lord Adolphus de Beauvoir. When he came out from dinner, he was so much excited, that I

was seriously alarmed lest he should commit himself at the ball ; and, therefore, endeavoured to dissuade him from going there. But finding that he was beyond the reach of argument, and seeing every probability of his doing what he would repent, if he persevered in his resolution, I had recourse to the bold expedient of gaining Bacchus over to my side, and, by his aid, succeeded in incapacitating Mr. Everard from carrying his rash intention into effect. In plain truth, I seduced him, no very difficult matter with a man so far gone, to drink another bottle of wine before dressing, on pretence that he was not sufficiently primed for his undertaking. He did so, and, to my great satisfaction, for I had anxiously watched the operation, just as he drained the last glass, his head dropped, and he quietly slid from the chair to the carpet. I had him conveyed to his chamber in a twinkling, disrobed, and consigned him over to Morpheus, who executed his trust so faithfully, that the young gentleman was not restored to consciousness until late the following day, and then retained such an indistinct impression of

the preceding evening's termination, that I ran no risk of a discovery, and, for aught I know, the worthy gentleman is to this day ignorant of the friendly fraud which had been practised upon him.

When he was restored to his faculties, he resolved upon calling at Mr. Fancourt's house, for the purpose of coming to a calm explanation with the young lady, and, as he was on terms of intimacy with the family, wrote to offer himself as a visitor for a day, in answer to which he received the following :

"DEAR SIR,

"Both Mr. Fancourt and myself regret much our house is so full that we cannot have the pleasure of seeing you, but hope to be more fortunate another time. We are sorry to hear that your affairs are still unsettled, but hope that you will ultimately be successful. Mr. Fancourt and the girls unite in best compliments with, dear sir,

"Yours truly,

"ELIZA FANCOURT.

"Elm Grove, Thursday."

To which Mr. Everard immediately despatched this reply.

“DEAR MRS. FANCOURT,

“I am so sorry I cannot have the pleasure of visiting Elm Grove, as it is uncertain when I shall be in this neighbourhood again. You will be glad to hear that an arrangement has been made, by which I am put in undisputed possession of the estates in litigation between Mrs. Everard and myself. With best regards to Mr. Fancourt and the young ladies, I remain, dear Mrs. Fancourt,

“Yours truly,

“CHARLES EVERARD.

“Black Swan, Thursday.”

Which in less than two hours produced the ensuing rejoinder.

“MY DEAR MR. EVERARD,

“Since I wrote to you this morning, I find that Lord Adolphus de Beauvoir, who has been staying here for the races, is obliged to leave us to-day. I am delighted at this, as we shall

now be able to take you in ; and *entre nous*, I can assure you this exchange will be most welcome to ALL. I need not tell you what a favourite you are here ! *That I believe you know.* We shall expect you at six.

“ Ever affectionately yours

“ ELIZA FANCOURT.

“ Elm Grove, Thursday.”

“ P. S.—Just as I was sealing this, your note came, and its contents have given me heartfelt pleasure. Most cordially do I congratulate you, my dear Charles, (you must pardon me, for I cannot forget old times,) on being restored to your rights. Believe me, that to none of your friends will this intelligence give more pleasure than it has done to us. I am impatient to hear all about it. God bless you !—E. F.”

“ *Take me in !*” said Mr. Everard as he finished this flattering billet. “ I ’ll be d—d if you do though !” and he sat down and penned an answer which concluded the correspondence.

“ DEAR MRS. FANCOURT,

“ I am sorry to say, that before I received your second obliging note, I had made arrangements which preclude me from accepting your kind invitation. I feel very much gratified by the interest in my welfare which you so kindly express, and which, believe me, I can fully appreciate.

“ With best compliments, &c. ever, my dear Mrs. Fancourt,

“ Faithfully yours,

“ CHARLES EVERARD.

“ Thursday, Black Swan.”

CHAPTER II.

ON more mature reflection, however, Mr. Everard felt as a man of honour that he had not yet sufficient grounds for dissolving his engagement with Miss Fancourt. He had indeed presumptive proof that the young lady was in no danger of dying on his account, but whether she had gone sufficiently far with Lord Adolphus de Beauvoir, or any other suitor, to release him in *foro conscientiæ*, seemed to be doubtful. He was not satisfied with the authentic information respecting the Fancourts, which I had gathered from various quarters, and which concurred in representing that family as a set of matrimonial schemers, and Elm Grove as a notorious mantrap, well known as such in his Majesty's land forces, with especial reference to a regiment of Lights, lately quar-

tered in the neighbourhood, one gallant officer of which corps had narrowly escaped destruction from the wiles of Miss Georgiana herself. As to Lord Adolphus de Beauvoir, he turned out to be an unprotected Guardsman, strayed into these parts on recruiting service, and having been lured to Elm Grove, had been given up for lost, but, warned of his danger not twenty-four hours ago by a friend in London, had made a precipitate retreat.

These stories, Mr. Everard said, might be merely servants' gossip and scandal, to which, under such circumstances, he was bound to give no ear. I could not quite understand this punctilio, and therefore, as I have before observed, I was silent upon the point. Accordingly, we immediately started for London, from whence Mr. Everard proposed writing to Miss Fancourt, formally to apprise her of his being in a situation to fulfil his engagement, but, at the same time, leaving it open to her, as far as he could with propriety, to put an end to it. To this epistle a reply came in course of post, and its contents proved that young ladies with small

fortunes are not always mercenary, whatever their parents or guardians may be, in their matrimonial views. She expressed her gratitude for the kind and generous point of view in which Mr. Everard had placed their engagement—conduct which had confirmed him in her warmest esteem, and induced her to be frank and explicit with him on the subject of his letter. She at once acknowledged that her affections had undergone a change and were in fact transferred to another object. “I do not mean,” she proceeded, “that he is in any respect worthier than yourself, but he has taught me to know the difference between a first juvenile preference and a strong permanent attachment. Whether we can ever marry is doubtful, for he is a younger son, and his father is a proud, worldly man, who looks to rank and connection for him, and has decidedly prohibited our union. I am sure, from the tone of your letter, that the decision which you have allowed me to make, will be as consonant to your views and feelings as it is to my own. Were I not satisfied that it would be a relief to you rather

than otherwise, I might have hesitated how to answer you ; but if your generous affectionate heart is not already in the keeping of one more worthy of such a treasure than myself, I am sure it cannot be long in finding such a possessor.

“ God bless you, dearest Charles, and let me subscribe myself,

“ Your affectionate sister.—G. F.

“ P. S.— Pray do not mention anything of this to mamma,— you understand me ; — she will not look at it in the same point of view that we do. A line from you to say that you do not reject the offer of my most fervent esteem and sisterly feeling, will make me very happy.”

This frank and disinterested avowal, was received in the spirit in which it was written. Mr. Everard, though by no means free from vanity, could be influenced by higher feelings, and on this occasion the coxcomb was lost in the man. He wrote, as I subsequently had an opportunity of hearing, (a very noble-minded letter in answer to the above, for I need hardly say, he never admitted me too far into his con-

fidence,) and made an offer of means to remove the main obstacle to Miss Fancourt's union with his successor in her affections. I will not positively vouch for the accuracy of my information, but certain it is, that soon after Miss Fancourt became the wife of Lord Adolphus de Beauvoir, between whom and Mr. Everard, a friendship of the closest nature immediately sprung up, and the young nobleman frequently let fall expressions which seemed to imply that he was under obligations to my gentleman. The only reason I have for doubting whether such was the fact, is, that this friendship subsists with unabated warmth to this day, a degree of endurance and constancy which I have observed to be rarely the case with alliances founded on gratitude.

However, be that as it might, Mr. Everard was as well pleased as Miss Fancourt, to be released from an engagement entered into when neither party knew their own minds or hearts. Not many more months elapsed before my worthy gentleman was united to Miss Greenfield, a young lady whose good temper and good sense enabled her to redress any little de-

iciencies in those respects which might have been discovered in her otherwise amiable and estimable husband. I beg to lay claim to some magnanimity for my conduct in this affair, since from the day of Mr. Everard's marriage my influence wholly ceased, and from a governor, as I may say, I sunk at once into a domestic—caressed and trusted, indeed, but still without any voice or interest in council. After remaining a short time in this situation, I began to find it irksome, and consequently applied for my discharge, which was reluctantly granted; but accompanied with a handsome offer of an annuity of fifty pounds, which, of course, I gratefully accepted.

CHAPTER III.

THE bounty of Mr. Everard enabled me to pause before I again embarked on the troubled sea of servitude. In truth, I was heartily sick of it ; for with capabilities, with vanity apart, I could not help feeling much beyond the average of my profession, I had been constantly baffled in my attempts at advancement. True, that I had been led away by my own conceit and extravagance ; that, like the immortal Signor de Santillane, I had even suffered my breast to be fired with visions which that great man actually realized ; but if not destined to reach the giddy eminence of secretary and governor to a prime minister, I might have hoped, at least, by this time (I was in my thirty-fifth year), securely to have attained the highest rank in my profession, and to have

realized a competence out of its legitimate profits and perquisites. But the fact is, I had not been able to save a shilling; and were it not for the kindness of a gentleman, to whom I had rendered no services to entitle me to such liberality, I should, after nearly twenty years' servitude, have found myself, as regarded pecuniary matters, just as I had begun my career. I was, therefore, disposed to quit such a harassing and ungrateful employment, and rather than pursue it, to retire for life upon the moderate provision of which I found myself possessed. At all events, I determined for the present to seek no situation, and to employ my leisure on a visit to my family, none of whom had I seen since my departure from home, when I went to Smallcombe. I was barely aware of their existence; for our correspondence had been very rare, and I had now heard nothing of them for upwards of two years. The only events, as far as I knew, which had taken place during my absence, were two of a very different complexion, namely, the marriage of my sister Jane, and the trans-

portation of my brother Bill, whose mistake in some nice distinction between *meum* and *tuum* unfortunately led to that result. I wrote to my mother, to announce my intended visit, and received her answer, that I should be welcome.

It was no longer with a view to parade my gentility, and play off airs of high life before my rustic relations, that I now, as on a former occasion—I mean immediately after the death of Lord Leighton — proposed to present myself at my father's house. Time and reverse of fortune had almost, if not wholly, eradicated all my foppery. It was with a feeling of melancholy and humiliation that I now anticipated this meeting with my relations after so long a separation. At last I doubted I had accomplished the prophecy of my father, that I should turn out good for nothing ; at least, I had failed to fulfil the bright expectations of the other members of my family. All that I had acquired was, knowledge of the world—a knowledge too frequently purchased at a price which ruins its possessor. But I am moralizing ; which can do no good, instead of teaching by

example, which if it fails in dissuading any tyro from entertaining ambitious views hardly to be attained, and if realized not worth the trouble and anxiety (if nothing more) which they have cost in the pursuit, may perhaps amuse a leisure hour of those who are wiser and better than myself.

My father, with whom, it will be remembered, I was never much of a favourite, received me, not unkindly indeed, but with no cordiality. My mother, whose affections and intellects time seemed to have impaired, did not, as I had expected, manifest any extraordinary emotion at my appearance ; and my unmarried sister, whom I had left a flaunting miss, I found, if truth must be told, a sour spinster. They hardly recollected my person, had few ideas in common with me, and our discourse, instead of overflowing, was forced and constrained. After they had informed me of my elder brother's and sister's respective marriages — the number, names, and ages, of their children — their worldly circumstances — together with a few more facts less interesting, the

conversation flagged. I began a history of my own adventures, which they listened to with attention, but without entering much into the spirit of it; perceiving which, I dropped detail, and confined myself to a very short outline, with which they were satisfied. Altogether, it was a very comfortless reception: and when I retired to my dormitory, I never before or since felt so sad and despondent. Next morning, however, I rose in better heart, resolved, whatever my private feelings might be, to suppress any outward and visible signs of mortification or disappointment, and to put a good face upon it. With this intent, I affected great interest in my father's farming speculations, and a longing desire to know how he had prospered. I asked various minute questions, and earnestly requested that he would walk round the farm with me, and point out all the improvements and alterations which had taken place during my absence. The old gentleman heard me, answered my questions, and complied with my request, but in a manner which satisfied me that I had not made, nor

was likely to make, any farther advance in his good graces.

As we were walking together, while I was persevering in my endeavours to impress him with a sense of the interest which I took in the welfare of my family, "Now son Simon," said he, "I speaks my mind just the same as I did twenty year ago, so no offence. It's very nateral like that you should be glad to find all we at home here is doing pretty well—I don't say nothing against that; but you mustn't go to come over me with anything more, 'cause that's what I calls humbug; you'll excuse me; I don't believe nothing of the sort. P'raps you thinks all this fine talk will make your old father come down with some stumpy?—no sich a thing. I don't mean to say I haven't scraped together summut, though the times is not what they was; but I considers you to be provided for, and whatever I got to leave will go between Jim and his sisters. Jim has got a family to purvide for; he's stuck to the business, and is as pretty a

varmer as any in Zummerzeshire. If ever you sets up in any trade, I don't mind being two hundred pound of the money; but varther than that you mustn't expect; for, as I said afore, as you have brewed so you must bake, &c."

I controlled my feelings during this address, nor did I make any objection to it; on the contrary, I thanked my father for his offer of pecuniary aid, and admitted the superior claims of my brother and sisters on his posthumous liberality. By this accommodating temper, I got on with my relatives much better than my first reception by them could have led me to expect; they began to evince something like pleasure in my society; and after a few days, determined on giving what my friend Tibbetts would, in days of yore, have called "a blow out" in honour of my visit.

To this entertainment, in compliment to me, the genteelest of their acquaintance, in fact, the pick of the neighbourhood only, were to be invited. My sister Mary, who held the so-

ciety in great contempt, and disliked expense; would have had it a mere tea-drinking affair; but the old gentleman set his face against this suggestion, declaring if he did the thing at all, it should be done handsome. The object was to comprise as much eating and drinking as could by possibility take place within a given space of time. It was decided, therefore, that the thing should commence with an abundant dinner at two o'clock, which should be succeeded by tea and buttered cakes at six; which should be followed by a hot supper at nine; the whole to conclude with punch and tobacco at discretion.

The company began to set down about noon; and soon after one o'clock, the whole of the guests, amounting to some eighteen or twenty, had arrived. Among the most distinguished were Mr. Mrs. Miss, and Mr. John Sharpus, people of high consideration, and whose presence was esteemed a great honour and condescension. Mr. Sharpus, senior, was the neighbouring great man's great man, and was whispered to be worth a matter of twenty

thousand pounds at the very least, having commenced his career as a cowboy on the estate. But Mrs. Sharpus was a woman of birth, and said to be related to a baronet. The young lady was a beauty, and sported superfine. Mr. John Sharpus was a lawyer, a very clever young man, and had been concerned for my brother Bill in that unfortunate affair which terminated in his exile. From certain observations which I had made, I suspected he had an eye to my sister, whom I found it was reported the governor intended to make a fortune. Next to these were the Ditchborns, who lived on their property; Mr. and Mrs. Dowling, (the governor of the county gaol and his lady;) Mr. Snipe, a medical practitioner, a fat little fellow about thirty, considered by the matrons as a Desirable of the first order, next made his appearance; nor in this category must I omit to mention Mr. Pringle, a Detrimental, indeed, but an Exquisite, who did nothing but hunt, shoot, and make love to the women.

Little was said during dinner, for much was

done. The Exclusives, I mean the Sharpuses and the Ditchborns, who occupied the upper end of the board, held little or no communication with the rest of the party, whom they evidently regarded with great scorn and contempt. Miss Sharpus, indeed, deigned to accept the assiduous attentions of Mr. Princock, who after several positive assertions that she ate nothing, and repeated expressions of his concern on that account, at length tempted her to try and pick a bit of chicken; upon which he placed on her plate some substantial slices of a huge fowl, accompanied with a due proportion of something, which he took from a small tureen, and resembling bread-and-water poultice. This delicate fare the fragile creature contrived to despatch, washing it down with a glass of diluted sulphuric acid, which Mr. Princock pronounced to be uncommon fine sherry; a decision assented to by all the judges present, after holding their glasses up to the light, and pouring the contents slowly down their throats.

After dinner, the ladies withdrew, according

to the usage of genteel society, Mrs. Sharpus and Mrs. Ditchborn walking out arm-in-arm; a prudent arrangement, by which my mother evaded committing herself to any opinion on the point of precedence between these ladies, a question which I understood had long divided the neighbourhood, and the agitation of which had frequently menaced a breach between these otherwise dear friends. When the gentlemen were left to themselves, my respected father cast an inquiring glance round the board, and then cried aloud, "Who says backy?" To this proposition the visages of the agricultural portion of the company expanded into a grin of acquiescence; but Mr. Sharpus, chopping the air with his hand, declared in the most positive, unhesitating manner, that he never smoked by any chance, and that it was a practice which he set his face against. Messrs. Sharpus, junior, and Princock were willing to take a cigar, but protested against the introduction of "clays." The governor, however, finding his suggestion premature, postponed it until after supper.

To console them for the absence of this luxury, the disappointed farmers paid assiduous court to the rum punch ; while their superiors stuck to the sulphuric acid and a black liquid, which Mr. Wiggins—having, I suppose, heard of the maxim, that mankind is governed by names,—dignified with the title of port wine. The conversation, notwithstanding some lively essays of Princock and young Sharpus, very soon gravitated towards turnips, fallows, and beasts ; which, to me, uninteresting topics, were discussed with a sort of drowsy earnestness that I found very provocative of slumber. The lawyer and the beau drew their chairs together, and excited by the inky beverage to which they confined themselves, discussed with great animation, horses, dogs, and women.

As to myself, nobody took any heed of me ; the dandies evidently looked upon me as a snob ; and the agriculturists, finding that I knew nothing of turnips, &c. held me equally cheap. I was fain, therefore, to address myself to a bashful chaw-bacon, who being too juvenile to mingle in the conversation of the

seniors, and utterly beneath the notice of the lawyer and the exquisite, was in a similar predicament with myself. With him I discussed the weather, past, present, and to come; which topic being exhausted, my young friend favoured me with a list of the various edibles which he affected, and his opinion of the comparative merits of each. Rude and untutored as were his notions on this head, yet it was interesting to observe the character stamped by nature. Had this youth's lot been cast in another sphere, he might have been an Ude or a Sefton. But thus does that mischievous imp, Fortune, delight in frustrating the designs of her sober sister, Nature. The gastronomic organization of an Apicius is found in a ploughman, and the *dura ilia* of a clown are given to a duke. The statesman often presides at the loom, and the weaver sits in the place of council. The munificent spirit is expended in peddling details, while the chapman doles out the revenues of a prince. And with this profound remark I close the chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

AFTER a somewhat prolonged session, the gentlemen rose to join the ladies, whom we found in the best parlour, (sixteen feet by fourteen,) drawn up in a half-moon, the full majestic form of Mrs. Sharpus at one end, the lean and lengthy Ditchborn at the other extremity of the figure. At the moment of our entrance, a perfect stillness reigned through the semicircle. Mrs. Sharpus sat conscious of dignity, her clasped hands resting on her ample rotundity, while the Ditchborn seemed intent on preserving the perpendicular of a tall, solitary feather, rising from her head. Our invasion, however, disturbed this solemn order, and it was apparent, from the vociferous jocularity which immediately succeeded, that the liquids imbibed by the male part of the com-

pany had not been thrown away. The best parlour was in a roar. Even the dignity of a Sharpus relaxed before the irresistible humour of a Dowling, and the death-like Ditch-born grinned horrible a ghastly smile, at the lively sallies of a Snipe. Thus time sped merrily until the tea-hour, when the exhausted physical powers of the company were refreshed with various farinaceous compositions, less delicate, perhaps, than substantial. After this meal, the elders sat down to cards, and the younger members of the party adjourned to the ball-room, which was the large barn, tastefully fitted up for the occasion. Here a fiddle and a flute were provided for the votaries of Terpsichore, who lost no time in pairing. Mr. John Sharpus opened the ball with Miss Wiggins. Snipe, the Desirable, led out his gentle sister ; Princock, the Detrimental, selected as his partner an exceedingly plain and awkward young lady, for the facetious purpose of making her pre-eminently ridiculous ; a proceeding which met with great applause, and such complete success, that the poor victim was, at length,

obliged to sit down, with a face like a furnace, and eyes glistening with the tears which would not be wholly suppressed. Thinking that the punishment somewhat exceeded the offence, (which was not aggravated by any gaudiness of dress, or forwardness of manner,) I seated myself beside her, and endeavoured to divert her attention, for which she was exceedingly grateful. My humanity was rewarded by some very agreeable conversation with this young lady, who, when her agitation had subsided, showed many marks of an intelligent and cultivated mind.

I found, as might be expected, that I now shared the ridicule which had previously been concentrated upon Miss Clark ; but I cannot say that I felt it very acutely. Ill-nature and ill-breeding are so common in every grade of society, from the circle of my lady paramount of fashion, to the tea-table of Mrs. Figgs, that a person of common sense and experience of this hollow, parasitical, backbiting world, will soon cease to concern himself about them.

As the reader will, probably, now have had

enough of these good people, who differed only in conventional points from the fribblers of St. James's and May Fair, I shall not recount any more of their feastings, sayings and doings, but only observe, that the whole thing went off greatly to the satisfaction of the worthy host and hostess, and not less so to that of the gay company, who, (having sufficiently ridiculed both in gross, and in detail, the hospitality of which they had partaken, and one half of the guests,) expressed themselves highly delighted with their evening's entertainment, and took their leave shortly before shrill chanticleer, &c. &c.

CHAPTER V.

I HAD little inducement to make a prolonged stay at my father's house. A few days after the fatted calf had been killed in honour of my return, I announced my speedy departure, to which an indifferent acquiescence was given by one parent, and a very faint show of opposition by the other. My elder brother, a narrow-minded man, who looked at me with jealous eyes, lest I should interfere with his interests, highly applauded my intention ; he thought it a thousand pities that a man like me, who had so much education and learning, and who was, in short, quite the gentleman, should waste my time in the country, among people who were not fit to associate with me, when I might be making a fortune in London.

It was with melancholy feelings, however,

that I turned my back upon my native home. I had anticipated a kinder welcome than I had received, and even entertained thoughts of settling down into matrimony and a small farm in the verdant county of Somerset.

These pleasing ideas were now dissipated, and I was again to resume the more irksome labour of fortune-hunting. The high excitement of novelty, hope, ambition, youthful energy, with which I had entered on this pursuit twenty years ago, was gone for ever, — satiated, subsided, repressed, extinguished. Nothing was left but the humble care of earning, on the easiest terms, a decent subsistence.

As I was not yet quite reconciled to sitting down for life on my fifty pounds a-year, I went to London to seek for employment, having determined never again to take any menial service, except one of the first class, and not to court even that, until I had failed in every attempt to provide myself in another capacity.

On my arrival in London, I did not hesitate to write to my friend Tibbetts, who, alone of my acquaintance, had taken notice of me

in my adverse fortunes, although he was the man from whom I expected and deserved the least. I gave him a succinct account of my adventures since we had last parted, stated to him my wishes and circumstances, and concluded by asking whatever advice and assistance he could afford me. The twopenny post very soon brought me an answer, not couched in the style of upstart prosperity, to the less fortunate associates of early life, but expressive of the same interest in my welfare, and the same disposition to serve me, which he had always evinced. He informed me, also, that his excellent wife would be happy to receive me at their house, having, at his instance, rescinded her decree of banishment, and that they expected me to join their family dinner the same day. I need hardly say, that I obeyed this summons with alacrity, checked only by a little embarrassment at meeting Lady Tott after the unpleasant *eclaircissement* which had attended the commencement of my acquaintance with her. When I made my appearance, however, her ladyship showed so

much good-natured anxiety to relieve me from this awkwardness, that I soon felt at ease, and Tibbetts, delighted to see me restored to his wife's good graces, was as happy as an honest and generous soul could make him. During dinner, no allusion whatever was made to my circumstances, past, present, or to come; but when the footman, (who, without malice be it spoken, was a much smarter knight of the shoulder-knot than his master had ever been,) had retired, and left us with a bottle of excellent port, Lady Tott, (who took her wine,) installed herself in an arm-chair at the fire-side, and filling her glass, immediately entered upon the subject of my affairs. Her opening was not very propitious.

“Mr. Wiggins,” said she, “you will expect, to be sure, that I should say something to account for my consenting to receive you in my house, after what took place when I first put my eyes upon you a matter of two years ago. I tell you candidly—for I'm a plain woman—I told Tibbetts at the time, that you was a very disgraceful acquaintance for any

man to have, and, if I hadn't known him to be a honest, industrious character, I should have judged him by the company he kept."

Here the good lady paused to empty and replenish her glass ; during which process her lesser moiety, who sat at the table a little in her rear, encouraged me, by various pantomimic gestures, to bear up under the weight of her ladyship's censure, and to hope for better things.

"Howsoever," resumed Lady Tott, "I ordered him to cut the connection, and say no more about it. In course those orders was obeyed. But I saw that Tibbetts had a hankering after his old comrade, and when I giv him liberty to speak on the subject, he pled so hard, that I said as much, as if ever you was in want, I might, perhaps, see what could be done to put you in an honest way of earning a living."

Another pause was made here, to permit a repetition of the process above mentioned, and Mr. Tibbetts's gesticulations became more lively and significant.

“ Well, then come your letter yesterday, and, as it seemed from that, you ’d been living respectable since that unfortunate rumpus, and as Tibbetts begged and prayed—”

“ You know, my dear little darling—” interrupted Mr. T.

“ Hold your tongue !” cried the lady, in an authoritative tone. “ And as he begged very hard, I agreed, after demurring a long time,—”

“ It was entirely your own suggestion,” muttered my friend.

“ *Will* you hold your *clack* ?—to ask you to the house, to talk the matter over, and see if anything could be done.—Now, Tibbetts, what do you mean by interrupting of me ? Don’t you know manners ?” This, uttered in a loud voice, was accompanied by a look meant to convey more than met the ear, and which seemed perfectly intelligible to her well-ordered spouse, who answered only with a submissive look. This trifling insubordination being quelled, Lady Tott swallowed a bumper, and returned to the discussion of my affairs. Having heard from me a full statement of my own

views and wishes, Lady Tott ruminated a few seconds, and then delivered herself.

“ I think you a fool, Wiggins,—mind that,— I think you a fool, not to go to service again, now that you’ve been so many years at it, and must have learned the trade pretty well. Hows’ever, that’s your own look out. Now Tibbetts and I was talking it all over last night, when we was a-bed, and he seemed to think it would be a good thing if you could get into a house.” She paused for a reply, and I immediately acquiesced in my friend’s view of the matter.

“ Well, we must see what can be done,” said the good-natured dame ; “ but, I tell you candidly, Simon, it’s no such easy matter as you may think for : it’s no use for you to think of looking for a situation in the city, after the kick-up two years ago. That old Jellico would be sure to ferret you out, and then there’d be a pretty kettle of fish. No, you must get a place at the West-end, if anywhere.” I hastened to assure my patroness, that I should consider the latter preferable to the other.

"You are, certainly," resumed her ladyship, eyeing me from head to foot, "what I should call a genteel-looking chap, and, lucky for you, it's mainly show they look to at the West-end; a little, ordinary fellow like Tibbetts, with all his character, would not have half the same chance there. I've got a cousin in Bond Street, in the same line of business that you and Tibbetts served in at Bath. I'll see him, please God, afore the week's out, and try what can be done."

With this friendly undertaking, for which, of course, I made suitable acknowledgments, Lady Tott rose to withdraw, leaving an injunction with her spouse, "not to spare the wine, but let Wiggins have his skin full."

"I told you so!" cried my friend, turning to me with an exulting countenance, after he had closed the door. "Didn't you see me winking and nodding to you not to be cast down, when she was jawing? That was all a preconcerted scheme, bless you, just to prevent your being too spicy, old fellow, ha! ha! But I say, your business is done, and no mis-

take. The cousin she mentioned, is the junior partner in the firm of Hutchins and Hooper, the great mercers, and a word from her will get you into their house in a moment. A hundred pounds a-year paid quarterly, with a certainty of promotion. She told me so herself, only she means to keep you in suspense about it for a week or two, though the thing's as good as done. But I say, Simon," added he, after pausing an instant to recover his breath, which had been exhausted in his eagerness to communicate this good news, and his countenance becoming very grave, "whatever you do, don't let on that I've told you anything—my eyes, I should never hear the last of it."

I relieved his mind by a solemn promise of silence on that point; and I proceeded to congratulate my old friend on the happiness which he seemed to enjoy in the marriage state.

"Happy!" cried he, "I'm the happiest, luckiest fellow in the world, and that you may book. My wife — damme, let's drink her health."

I pledged the toast in a bumper, which my friend repeated, and then, with twinkling eyes and thickening accents, commenced a warm eulogy upon his consort.

“ You don’t know what a woman she is, Simon, she is one in a hundred ; she’s been more like a mother to me than anything else. She has made a man of me. If it hadn’t been for her taking a fancy to me, and posting the coal to get me into the firm, I might have been a clerk, perhaps, all my life. How such a woman ever came to fix her affections upon an unprepossessing exterior, like me, I can’t think. It only shows what a ’nigma the sex is, and that it isn’t always your swell coves, — I don’t mean to hurt your feelings, Simon, — that captivate the female heart. Yet, wanting, as I know I am, in personal attractions and flash manners, such is my confidence in Lady Tott’s virtue, that I should not fear exposing her to all the arts and wiles of the most topping nob that walks Piccadilly and the Burlington Arcade, — damned if I would.”

I commended, with due gravity, his confidence in the imperturbable chastity of Lady Tott, and, tea having been announced, I proposed to join that immaculate dame, as I perceived that my worthy friend's faculties were somewhat impaired by the port wine which he had swallowed. The presence of his amiable spouse, however, soon sobered him, and her ladyship being in high spirits, called upon me for the history of my Bath adventures, which I told with tolerable candour, to the great admiration and amusement of my kind entertainers. Lady Tott especially insisted upon a full and particular account of my proceedings in connection with the Jellico family, which part of my narrative afforded her ladyship the greatest pleasure. She laughed until the tears ran down her cheeks, and almost swore it was the best thing she had ever heard in all her born days.

CHAPTER VI.

I FOUND, as I had never doubted, that the intimation of my friend Tibbetts was correct. Within a week after I had dined at his house, I received a note from Lady Tott, acquainting me that, in pursuance of her recommendation, Messrs Hutchins and Hooper, of Bond Street, were willing to take me into their establishment, and had named an hour on the following day for me to wait upon them.

I was politely received by the junior partner, Mr. Hooper, who, after briefly examining me as to my qualifications, was pleased to express his regret that he could not immediately offer me a situation equal to my merits, but it was of course necessary that I should acquire some practical knowledge of business, before my superior talents and attainments could be made

available. To this I, of course, assented, and, accordingly, it was decided that I should, for the present, come in as a supernumerary hand, at a salary of one guinea per week.

The establishment consisted of fourteen gentlemen, exclusive of the foreman and cashier. It comprised a Piminy and a Tibbetta, that is to say, a superfine bean and a snob. The Piminy of Bond Street, (by name, Sweeting,) differed in some particulars, though in no essential trait, from him of Mileson. The one had a wider and nobler theatre of action than the other; but who shall say that the Bathonian would not have rivalled the West-ender, had his lot been cast in the same sphere? The difference was of that sort which exists between a Napoleon and a Cromwell; a difference which by no means implies a natural superiority on either side, being, for aught that we can ascertain, only that of circumstances. A critical eye might have detected a degree of exaggeration and incongruity in the style and appointments of Piminy, which the capital

would have chastised and redressed. The provincial was the more exquisite of the two, and the delicacy of his shape corresponded with the texture of his mind, which was melancholy, haughty, shy. Sweeting, on the contrary, was a fine, tall, symmetrical figure, standing six feet in his stockings, with a magnificent head of hair, whiskers, and white teeth. Piminy's soft, sentimental way, was often successful with the women; but Sweeting had a dashing, confident, insinuating, persevering style, which they could rarely resist. When all his eloquence and coaxing had failed, he would, sometimes, lean gracefully over the counter, and, putting his head under the fair one's bonnet, whisper something, (a soft nothing, perhaps,) the result of which, generally, was, that the article he had been recommending was carried to her ladyship's carriage, and to her account. He was said to do more business with the sex than any other man in London, as a proof of which, I am credibly informed, that any house at the court end of the town would have

gladly given him double the usual salary, which, in fact, he received from Messieurs Hutchins and Hooper.

The other twelve gentlemen were imitations, more or less happy, of this accomplished chief, whom they all heartily hated, abused, and depreciated, according to human nature. As for the snob, he was an humble, seedy character, approaching middle life, and somewhat inclining to corpulency. He had been, nevertheless, I was told, a smart fellow in his time, but had fallen upon a wife of extraordinary fecundity — an accident sufficient to take the shine out of any man.

I had not been long in the house when, according to my usual fortune, I was distinguished by the notice of Mr. Sweeting, who with the generosity of true genius, which knows not jealousy or envy, seeing me apt, handsomely offered to initiate me into the mysteries of my new, or rather my re-adopted, profession. Under his tutelage I soon arrived at a very respectable station among my fellows, but I never reached, nor hoped to attain any-

thing like the eminence of my preceptor. That great artist had some natural qualifications in which I was deficient — a modest assurance, which no repulse could subdue ; a patient equanimity, which no caprice could ruffle ; an inexhaustible fund of good humour, and great powers of flattery.

In these, the main requisites of the profession, Sweeting was all-accomplished ; but, for my part, I could not rally after a rebuff ; my temper would sometimes give way, when I had in vain exhibited bale after bale of goods, to some unreasonable customer ; and though I had considered myself to be no mean proficient in the art of blarney, I confessed being completely outdone by the masterly strokes and daring flights of this gifted person. I have seen him persuade an old woman of seventy to purchase a gay article of dress adapted to sweet seventeen, by gravely arguing upon its compatibility with her eyes, her complexion, her figure, or her style ! But when he had youth or beauty to deal with, he would have recourse to raptures,

passionate entreaty, remonstrances, glowing eloquence, ending, not unfrequently by forcing, with a sort of playful violence, the costly frippery upon the bewildered and faintly resisting fair one. Now these were things which neither I, nor any of the other gentlemen, ever ventured upon; such bold attempts genius alone could sustain; in inferior hands they would infallibly be attended with ridiculous and ignominious failure.

CHAPTER VII.

A YOUNGER man than myself might have been corrupted by the friendship of Mr. Sweeting, whose morals were none of the strictest ; but his precept and example wrought no harm upon one who had already taken a degree in the school of vice, and retained little more zest for common-place debauchery than a man of twenty-five usually has for Greek and Latin. Still, in my present dearth of friends, I did not think it expedient to disgust a person, who seemed well affected towards me, by any manifestation of contempt for his tastes and habits. Besides, I was somewhat amused by the society to which he introduced me, which was of a different class to any I had hitherto seen. It was very promiscuous, including second-hand beaux, Regent Street loungers, fallen

dandies, broken "legs," and sporting characters of every description; many who knew a little, and others who knew too much; some who were travelling the road to ruin, and not a few who had already reached their destination.

Sweeting himself, it is perhaps needless to say, was not one of the slow or soft sort. He could make as good a book* as most men, throw a main, and play a fair game of whist; was a very pretty dragsman, and could fight a few. He was to be seen, likewise, occasionally with the King and the Old Surrey, being shares with a milliner (a bruising rider) in a prad, "pink," and "tops." Most men have a model, either living or dead, after which they fashion, either studiously or insensibly, their minds and manners. Mr. Sweeting, who was himself an original to many, acknowledged a master in a certain Honourable

* From this expression, it is not, we presume, to be inferred that Mr. Sweeting was a literary practitioner. It is probably intended to intimate that he was an author only in that sense in which Messrs. Gully and Crockford are distinguished.—ED.

Coventry Stapleton, a gentleman, who having invested a considerable fortune in experience, had of late years been engaged in turning his speculation to profitable account. I had a personal recollection of him, as one of Lord Leighton's set, among whom he was at that time currently reported to be "quite done," as, indeed, proved to be the fact, for he soon after passed through the Insolvent Court. He it was who, in modern times, was the first to abolish the razor from the toilet, an example which has since been generally followed in chins of the first fertility. He, also, as is well known, was the inventor of that peculiar low-crowned "tile" which bears his name, and is supposed to possess such virtue that it would make even Lord L. or Mr. C. look knowing in spite of nature.

This original genius was now, however, fallen from his high estate, fought shy of by men whose fortunes had been partly built on the ruin of his, and by the hirsute tribe of dandies who had been taught by him how a vacant countenance might be planted and

trimmed so as to give it an imposing and even picturesque appearance. But this gave him neither surprise nor concern; his knowledge of the world had taught him that such was the natural course of events, and he adapted himself to his change of circumstances apparently without effort. The talents which had hitherto been disclosed only in the cultivation of whiskers and the invention of hats were, by the pressure of adversity, fully developed; and he who had all his life been considered, and indolently suffered himself to be used, as a flat, now came out in the character for which nature had intended him, of a flat-catcher. In this vocation he laboured with great assiduity; and his gains, though not considerable, were steady, as it was the smaller fry chiefly which came to his net.

This was the gentleman to whom Mr. Sweeting looked up as to his guide, philosopher, and friend, and whose patronage he really appeared to enjoy in a remarkable degree. Mr. Sweeting affected great importance and mystery as to the nature of his connection

with the Honourable Coventry ; but, as it required no conjuror to divine that interest must, in some shape, be at the bottom of such an alliance, I soon discovered the terms upon which it was based. Sweeting, it seemed, had lost a considerable sum on horse-races to Mr. Stapleton, who generously forgave him all that he could not pay on condition that he offered up so many victims at the shrine of a certain temple of fortune, of which his honourable friend had lately constituted himself high priest. In plain truth, Mr. Stapleton had lately set up a gaming-house, for which he had engaged Sweeting to act as a *touter*, and by his agency had procured for the concern some of its most valuable customers.

I had lived long enough to be very sceptical as to the disinterested friendship of men or women of the world ; therefore, after making due allowance for my merits, natural and acquired, I came to the conclusion that there must exist a private motive for the extraordinary marks of esteem bestowed upon me by Mr. Sweeting. That motive, I very soon

perceived, was a strong desire to possess himself of the annuity granted to me by my late employer on the consideration of transferring the same to his friend Stapleton.

His first important attempt was in the shape of a kind offer of a share in a capital bet on the Derby, which I evaded, and learned the next day, that the animal which it had been proposed to me to back was "dead amiss;" but upon my mentioning this piece of intelligence to my friend, he whispered confidentially in my ear that the report was only a *ruse* of the stable to get large odds. However, I still declined the adventure, and the horse was never again heard of. He borrowed on several occasions, and scrupulously repaid, small sums, by way of establishing himself in my confidence; but he built upon sand. With unabated ardour, he continued to try various devices, until weary of a game where I could not lose, and admiring the perseverance and ability of my antagonist, I interrupted him one day, when he was about to unfold some new speculation, and told him in plain terms that

I was, and had been from the first, perfectly aware of his designs, and hoped he would forgive me for having trifled with him so long; complimenting him, at the same time, upon his high qualifications for the art of imposing upon mankind.

Soothed by this flattery, the disappointment and irritation which he had at first evinced completely disappeared; he thanked me for my frank and gentlemanly explanation, and handsomely reproached his own dulness for having failed to perceive in me an equal, if not superior, genius. He then proposed partnership; but, with many thanks for his good opinion and obliging offer, I declined it, as having some time since retired from that line of business, and not being disposed, at least at present, to resume it. On this ground, I also felt bound in honour to decline his confidence respecting any of his views and operations. Mr. Sweeting appreciated the delicacy of my scruple, though he regretted that he should be thereby deprived of the benefit of my sympathy and advice. He expressed a

strong desire, however, to be acquainted with my history, and the general result of my experience, as he doubted not that he should derive therefrom much valuable instruction. I complied with his request, in so far as prudence would permit, and my auditor declared himself greatly edified ; protesting that the Bath adventure was the finest thing he had ever heard, and reflected immortal honour upon me.

“ You ’ve been unlucky,” said he, “ or you must have made your fortune by this time ; but when the dice goes against you, what’s the use. Luck ’s all, sir, in this world. How often you see the biggest flat break the bank ; and a fellow, who can snuff a candle or bore a hole in the ace of hearts, snuffed out himself, after all, by a young one who has never before touched a trigger. If merit could ensure success in this world, I think, without flattery, you must have been a rich man by this time. The talent which you showed in your first place (I mean with Davison) was quite extraordinary for so young a man ; but there,

the d——d luck beat you at starting. I'm only surprised, if I may be allowed to make the remark, that, after having shown such promise, you should have behaved so like a *muff* in Fosberry's service. Surely you didn't think it would pay to be what is called faithful to your master's interests? to retire upon a legacy of two hundred pounds as a reward for thirty or forty years' honest servitude?"

I admitted, to my shame, that I had once for a short time acted under such a delusion.

"Ah!" said Sweeting, "now that's what I call the inconsistency of human nature; a man of your sense fancying anything half so slow. But as I used to learn at school, *nemo omniba hora sapet*."

CHAPTER VIII.

A FEW days after this *eclaircissement*, Mr. Sweeting proposed to me to accompany him to a convivial party at the Coal Hole, where he wished to introduce me to some of his friends, and where, also, he intimated that I should meet one or two of my old acquaintances in high life. My taste for the humours of society, which was not yet quite decayed, induced me to accept this invitation. Those polite places of resort, the Coal Hole and the Cider Cellar, had been my frequent haunts during that most dissipated period of my life, when I belonged to what was called O'Dienne's set, the Chesterfields and Castlereaghs of second-hand *bon ton*. Happily for my character and constitution, those wild days did not last long,

and since that time, I had seen nothing of the places of amusement above mentioned.

When we entered the ordinary, dinner was being placed upon the tables, and there were between fifty and sixty persons assembled. Among these, my companion found many acquaintances. "How are you?—how are you?—how d'ye do?" was echoed from several quarters, and were respectively acknowledged by Mr. Sweeting with a nod, a bow, or smile, or a shake of the hand, according to the quality or means of the different persons from whom these greetings proceeded.

Among those to whom he vouchsafed only a slight recognition, I observed a face and figure, of which I had some faint recollection, and asked my cicerone who he was.

"I told you," replied he, "that you would meet some of your old friends. That is Davison, whom you lived with fifteen or sixteen years ago. Poor devil! he is always to be seen hovering about these places. I wonder how he lives?"

I might have puzzled my memory for a long

time before I should have identified this person with the gentleman in whose service my capabilities as a valet were first approved. It was, indeed, Davison that I saw ; but how changed from him whom I had formerly known under that name ! Where was the jaunty step, the self-confident, and somewhat insolent, air—the goodly person—the brave apparel ? Not a single trace was left of these in the seedy, shambling figure, and the pinched features, in which care and hunger were visibly portrayed, dashed also with an expression of low cunning. I looked hard at him, but he betrayed no recollection of me, and his eye shrank from beneath my gaze.

Mr. Sweeting seemed to be in high estimation in this circle. A middle-aged man of sporting appearance, whom he addressed as “ Sir Henry,” and who proved to be a broken-down baronet, once well known in the fashionable world, but now driving a stage-coach, expressed a wish to show him a new team that he had just begun to work, and proposed that he should share the box on the following Sunday, to which Sweeting agreed.

Another gentleman, answering to the aristocratic name of D'Arcy, applied to him for information respecting a dog fight, and, while he was going into the particulars of this interesting event, a tall, pale-faced youth, with long nose and goggle eyes, broke from the circle, and, seizing him by the arm, took him aside, and asked, with great anxiety, and in a low key, whether he had got those odds for him, about the mare? In answer to which, Mr. Sweeting communicated something very confidentially to the ear of his client, whom he styled "my lord." During this proceeding some of the bystanders smiled significantly, and the baronet, looking towards Sweeting, jerked his thumb towards his shoulder, a gesture, which the other acknowledged by an almost imperceptible wink of the eye; indications from which it required no great sagacity to infer that the young nobleman was educating for one of those useful, and, indeed, indispensable members of society, denominated "flats."

While this was going on, the landlord took his station at the head of the table, and we

repaired to our places. I had secured a seat next to Sweeting, who was in the neighbourhood of most of his quality friends. I immediately recognized sundry persons, both of high and low degree, whom I had formerly known, either personally, or by sight; but nobody seemed to recollect me, which is not surprising, as greater persons than valets every day drop out of society without being missed or remembered. Besides, my exterior had undergone a considerable alteration. I had formerly been an humble disciple of the Stapletonian school, rejoicing in a profusion of golden hair, and whiskers which completely environed my countenance. But I levelled the whole concern at the same time that I put down my other fashionable appurtenances; namely, after my unfortunate recognition by Lady Jellico, at Mrs. ——'s assembly in honour of the intended nuptials of Lady Tott with John Tibbetts, Esquire. Since that period, I had worn a dark-coloured wig of very modest dimensions, and kept my face closely clipped. So that with these changes, and an absence of four years, the wonder would

have been, perhaps, if any of my gay friends had recollected me. My cicerone pointed out to me several individuals in this motley assemblage, with whose persons I was before unacquainted. For instance, he whispered in my ear, that a handsome, but somewhat effeminate young man, nearly opposite to us, was an M. P., a rising character in the sporting world, and that his neighbour, a genteel, quiet-looking person in black, with whom he was in conversation, was a noted betting-man, who, from being an ostler at York, had, within these few years, realized a considerable fortune on the turf, and was esteemed one of its most respectable members. He then pointed out the son of an archbishop, in juxtaposition with a low player ; an officer of the Guards, and a hair-dresser, with many others ; directing my attention, lastly, to the occupier of the vice-chair, a short, broad-shouldered, red-haired plebian-looking young man, who was, however, no less than the Marquess of Lancashire, a title illustrious in history, but in its present inheritor, better known at Bow Street, than at

the House of Lords; in the purlieus of Drury Lane, than in the courtly precincts of St. James's. The noble Marquess was, apparently, the life and soul of an admiring circle, the components of which, Sweeting described under the general head of "blackguards."

It is said that misery brings people into strange company; but the same may, I think, be more justly predicated of sporting, which draws together people, whom no other magnet of attraction, and scarcely any possible concurrence of circumstances, could bring into contact. Senators and swindlers; the pride of aristocracy, and the scum of the soil; learning and ignorance, are, by this means, familiarized. A minister of state has been known to give audience to a trainer, or jockey, while a deputation is cooling its heels in the ante-chamber; and even a minister of a higher description, may, occasionally, be seen in communion with such persons, though, doubtless, not to the detriment of his sacred calling.

The dinner was succeeded by a series of toasts, the nature of which, (to borrow a con-

venient phrase,) can be better conceived than described. Comic songs followed, of which the most applauded, was one sung, or, rather, vociferated by my Lord of Lancashire, for his vocal merit consisted, chiefly, in stentorian lungs. His performance, likewise, though devoid of wit, abounded in its cheap and easy substitute, which, probably, was more palatable and intelligible to his audience, as a draught of muddy ale is more grateful to the lips of the chaw-bacon, than the finest, sparkling, generous Champagne.

The singing over, the room thinned very rapidly, and those who were left drew together towards either extremity of the table, some to the end where the Marquess still presided, and others to the upper part of the board, when the chair having been vacated by Mr. Rhodes, was now filled by Sir Harry. Lord Reginald Lofty, the noble youth whom I have ventured to describe as a flat, came round to a vacant chair the other side of Sweeting, and resumed the subject of the bet upon which he was so anxious. Perceiving this, Sir Harry again ex-

changed a wink and a laugh with the knowing ones on either side of him ; but the young lord, quite unconscious of the ridicule with which he was regarded, communicated his information and opinions, as if he were perfectly satisfied that he was one of the initiated ; a delusion, which the grave and deferential attention of Sweeting was calculated to confirm. While this was proceeding, Lord Lancashire, who had begun to show symptoms of wine, called out from the foot of the table,

“Lofty, you damned ass, put that betting-book in your pocket ; don't you see that you're among a set of thieves and sharpers ?”

This sally was received with a laugh by the party thus designated, and Sir Harry, with a benignant smile and soothing accent, told Lancashire that he was very drunk.

“Drunk !” shouted the peer, starting up and staggering towards the other end of the room. “You lie, you rascal. I'm as sober as a tee-totaller, and I'll prove it. I'll fight any man in the room, except the Hampshire Chicken,” (a prize-fighter, who had sat at the

right hand of the vice-chair all the evening,) "and give him a stone." So saying, he threw himself into a fighting attitude.

"Don't make such a row, that's a good fellow," said Lofty; "you're interrupting business."

"Yes, I believe I'm preventing your business being done, and I mean it," rejoined the Marquess. "Ay, damn you; ye may look and laugh; I know you all."

Here Mr. Sweeting begged respectfully to ask his lordship whether he meant to include him in the description which his lordship had been pleased to give of the gentlemen among whom he had the honour to sit? To which the peer immediately replied with a very decided affirmative, and a pointed remark on the singular assurance which had dictated the interrogatory.

"Not that I know anything about you," said he, "but, from the company you keep, I've no doubt you're a damned rascal."

Now, though this might not have been far from the truth, yet, it must be owned, the

inference was a somewhat violent one ; therefore, the matter could not be expected to rest here, and, accordingly, Mr. Sweeting "took the liberty of observing, that, as his lordship had so far forgotten himself as to use such language in reference to him, he must beg leave to inform him, humble as he was, that he considered himself quite as respectable as his lordship."

Which words had scarcely passed his lips, when a blow from the peer's fist prostrated him on the floor. He was up again in a trice, and coolly proceeded to disencumber himself of his upper garments, an example which his antagonist lost no time in following. A clear stage was soon formed for the combatants, who took their places, the noble Marques being backed by the Hampshire Chicken, whose earnest request to be allowed to "pitch into the snob," in the stead of his noble patron, had been peremptorily refused by the latter. Sir Harry was obliging enough to lend Sweeting a knee. To work then the champions went, as soon as the Chicken had whispered some important advice to his principal, who seemed, however,

wholly to disregard it, for he rushed impetuously on his foe, a proceeding, at which the experienced backer shook his head, and, in his vexation, muttered audibly, "jest exactly what I par-tickler told un not to." The event proved the Chicken to have been right, for Sweeting, who, then at least, possessed the advantage over his opponent of a steady eye and a cool head, stepped aside at the moment when the rash but gal-lant nobleman made his assault, and, before he could recover his equilibrium, was, in his turn, felled by a well-planted body-blow from the stal-wart arm of the knight of the counter. The Chicken immediately stepped forward and handled his man, but, in doing so, could not repress a tribute of professional admiration of the style in which he had been floored. The Marquess, however, was game, and, being restor-ed to his pins, advanced again to the scratch gai-ly, but with a little more caution than before. A little sparring took place before either party went to work, and the peer, by a clever feint hav-ing drawn the haberdasher off his guard, caught him a teaser on the upper lip, and the claret

appeared forthwith. This drew forth a shout of exultation from the Lancastrians; but the cautious Chicken, whose anxious eye was intent upon what would happen next, suppressed his feelings, until in a rally, both men fell, Sweeting under. Then, indeed, he greeted the ears of his principal with that meed of applause, so grateful to ingenuous youth in every department of ambition. Third round, the peer came up laughing, the snob confident, but very careful. He stopped almost all his lordship's blows, put in an ugly one on his canister, and threw him a heavy fall. Fourth round, three to two on the haberdasher, who was fresh, and showed no other mark of punishment than a scratch on the lip, whereas, the lord was *piping*, but full of game; the snob still cool and careful; some very pretty in-fighting, but his lordship was, evidently, as much exhausted by the blows which he gave, as by those which he received. Ten to one offered, but no takers. The Chicken looked grave, gave his man a *go-down* of brandy, and chafed his temples. Fifth round, the

nobleman fought wildly, and, it being manifest that he had had enough, his antagonist very handsomely put an end to the contest by giving him a knock-down blow, which the critical eye of the professional bruiser immediately declared to be a settler, and declined, therefore, bringing his man again to the scratch. In announcing this decision, he owned that "the gentleman," as he now termed Sweeting, "had behaved quite fair, and had a very pretty notion of fighting," but maintained, at the same time, that his man had been as much beat by drink, as by the punishment he had taken.

"As to this here bit of a skrimmage," proceeded the Chicken, "it's all gammon. But what I sáys, is this ; there ain't a prettier man in England than him as lies there," pointing with his foot to the prostrate, and almost insensible nobleman. "He've got plenty of wind, and game too, and the best *receiver* as ever I seed. But the liquor's the ruin of un, as I've told un many's the time. If it warn't for that, he should fight any ten stun man in Great Britain, and I shouldn't mind laying

out a hundred pound upon it, if I had the money."

Having pronounced this eulogy on his noble friend, he lifted him to his legs, and then proceeded to apply some restoratives, which soon had the desired effect, and the blood being washed from his face and hands, he showed no other mark of the conflict than a black eye. No sooner was his dress adjusted, than the eccentric and generous nobleman came forward and addressed his conqueror with,

"Well, old fellow, you've licked me fairly, and I believe I earned it. So, damme, shake hands."

Sweeting accepted the proffered honour with a low bow and a facetious smile, protesting that he should be ashamed of himself, if, after his lordship's handsome conduct, he were to remember anything unpleasant, which might have escaped his lordship in a moment of excitement. This untoward affair being thus happily settled, Lord Lancashire proposed that all the party, (including those whom he had so recently stigmatized as thieves and

sharpers,) should adjourn and sup with him at Joy's. This invitation was declined by the slow lot, who retired amidst the hootings and execrations of the peer, notwithstanding which, I was disposed to follow their example, but was detained by Sweeting, who urged me to stay and see it out. The supper party was thus reduced to eight; viz, Lord Reginald Lofty, the Honourable Mr. D'Arcy, Captain Smallbones of the Hussars, (an innkeeper's son, and a humble follower of Lord Lancashire's; less, it was said, from liking to the service, than by way of bringing himself into fashion,) Mr. James Ruggles of the Manchester Eclipse, Mr. Sweeting, the Chicken, and myself. As we were leaving the room, Sweeting, who was always what is called "wide awake," stepped up to the Marquess, and, with the insinuating address which belonged to this prince of shopmen, presented his lordship with a card of "the house," to which he solicited the honour of his lordship's patronage, expressing a confident opinion that any orders which he might be pleased to give them, would be executed

in such a style as to ensure to the firm his lordship's future favours. Whether it was that the ingenuity of taking such an opportunity of doing business fell in with his humour, or, that the disclosure thus made of his recent antagonist's quality, struck his sense of the ludicrous, I cannot determine, but Lord Lancashire burst into a loud laugh, and, putting the card in his pocket, swore that he would give us a turn. He kept his oath, too, and the consequence was, that Messieurs Hutchins and Hooper took several hundred pounds which, otherwise, would probably have never come into their till.

CHAPTER IX.

It was about eleven o'clock when we sallied out, bound for Covent Garden. The two lords, who were more under the influence of the jolly god than the rest of the party, led the way, hallooing and shouting scraps of loyal and amorous ditties. Next came the Captain and the Chicken; then followed the honourable gentleman and Mr. Sweeting, Mr. Ruggles and myself bringing up the rear. In this order we marched down the Strand, amidst the stares, the laughter, or the muttered reprobation of the passers-by, who, however, each and all, gave us, what in nautical language is called a wide berth. The police, likewise, stood aloof, having, no doubt, sound reasons for not interrupting our progress.

As we walked along, Mr. Ruggles and I,

who were comparatively sober, fell into conversation, which turned naturally upon our eccentric leader, of whom Mr. R. spoke in terms of great esteem and regard.

“He’s a gentleman every inch of him,” said he, “and if he could but keep his hand from his mouth, he’d make a very sooperior coachman, I say. He isn’t like your swells who mount up a-top of a drag, and drive four made horses down to Richmond and back again, and then fancy themselves coachmen; but I don’t call ’em coachmen, I don’t. I like to see a man get on the bench, and work a team of rum uns; that’s summut like. I’ve been on the road now near thirty year, and I’ve seen my lord do some jobs that I wouldn’t have done for a bit of money. I suppose you’ve heard of his ordering four hunters out of the stable to be put to his drag at twelve o’clock at night? Well, that’s a blessed truth, for I was stopping down along with un at his seat in Northamptonshire at the time it came off. I said all as lay in my power, and so did the other gents who were there, to prevent un from doing

it, but the more we argued, the more he wouldn't listen to us, for he was precious swipy. Well, after a deal of trouble, these here hunters was put to, for none of 'em, in course, had ever looked through a collar before, and my lord orders the company to jump on the drag. Some of 'em choked off, and wouldn't have it at any price. Mr. D'Arcy was the first to follow the governor, and took his place on the box with a weed in his off cheek, just as unconcerned as if he was sitting alongside of me, with my steady London team before him. The captain then came next, but looking as if he didn't above half like it, and a parson of the name of Brown, or Davis, or some such name, and that was all, except the two poor devils of grooms belonging to the drag. In course I couldn't leave my friend in such a situation, so I just hitched up behind to be ready in case of any accident. 'Are you all right,' says my lord, gathering up the ribbons. 'All right, sir,' says I. 'Let 'em go,' says he, and, at the word, the four men, who had been holding on, might and main, one to

each horse, dropped the reins, and laid hold of the cloths. In a moment, sir, they were all of a heap; the near wheel horse goes into his collar like a cannon shot, his partner gets over the pole, and both the leaders, which was mares, run back upon the coach. There he had 'em, two milling, one bolting, and t'other laying down. You never saw such a mess. The stable fellows they run forward to help, but got damned for their pains, and ordered out of the way. The captain, who was standing up behind the governor, looks as if he wanted to cut it, which Mr. D'Arcy no sooner twigs, than he takes the cigar out of his face, and coolly tells him to sit still,—there was no danger; but Smallbones swore he didn't see any fun in getting his neck broke for nothing, so he drops off the coach without any farther remark, and small blame to him, perhaps, for so doing. Meantime, my lord was busy with the team, and, what with patience and pluck, and the double thong, I'm blessed if he didn't wag 'em in about five minutes, and they set off at about sixteen mile an hour. We had

about a quarter of an inch to spare going through the lodge, and not so much turning the corner; I thought we never could have done it.

“Well,” resumed Mr. Ruggles, after a pause to take breath, “after travelling at this thundering pace for a matter of three miles, I began to look out for a steepish pitch about a hundred yards forward. So I sung out to the governor, ‘My lord,’ says I, ‘if you can ease ’em a bit, I’ll put on the skid.’ ‘Skid be d—d, you old fool,’ says he; ‘I’m a-going to *slip* ’em down this here hill.’ ‘Oh, crikey!’ says I, to the parson, ‘hold on by your eyelids!’ but he sot up like a brick. However, my lord knew what he was about, for as soon as he began to feel their mouths, they answered to it, and settled down to their work like old uns. To cut my story short, the upshot of it all was, that we drove into —, roused up the people at the inn, had a jolly good supper, and *hunted the team next day with the Dook*. What d’ye think of that for a spree?”

“What pity ’tis,” said the coachman, after I had made some remarks on the skill and courage which this wild story seemed to indicate in the hero, “what pity ’tis, that a nobleman with such a fortune, and such a head-piece, as one may say, should demean himself by associating with the people that he do. Why now, there’s that low, blackguard feller, what they call the Hampshire Chicken, but his real name is Scroggs, he’s constantly down with my lord in the country. The very last time I was there on a visit, I found this vagabond and two of his pals, as much at home as if the house belonged to ’em. There they was, sot up at table, along with us all, a grubbing and chaffing away, and all the livery servants a-waiting upon ’em just as if they was our equals. And there was the silver plate, and the wax chandeliers, and the tablecloth with the *harms* engraved upon it, and the Champagne wine, and the Burgundy wine, port and sherry,—you never see such a grand set-out,—and all, as one might say, for such disreputable characters. I got my bread to

earn, so I says nothing, and my lord has always behaved like a gentleman to me ; but, if it wasn't out of friendship to him, and not to offend him, you understand, I'm just damned if I'd put my legs under the same mahogany with the fellers,—I a'n't used to such society."

I fully concurred with Mr. Ruggles in the indignation which he expressed, both on his own account, and that of his noble friend.

"But," I added, "I cannot understand what entertainment his lordship and his friends can find, either in, or for, such persons."

"Oh, bless you!" answered my communicative companion, "they don't care what they does. You'd be surprised if you was to hear the games they carried on, that they should ever live to tell of it. Why the truth is, you see, this here Chicken as they call un, was a man of his own making. He picked him off a dunghill, I believe, put him in training, and backed him to fight Bonny Hodge, the Brummagem hardware man, who was then looked upon to be cock of the ring, for two hundred guineas a side. To give the man his

due, Scroggs behaved well enough there. He fought as good a battle as ever you wish to see, for an hour and ten minutes, and gave the hardware man such a gallows pounding, that he never recovered it, and died about three months after; but they couldn't bring it in manslaughter. Well, the Marquess was so pleased, that he had Scroggs and all his family down to the Hall, and treated 'em like lords, out of gratitude. But then that was carrying it, you know, to a ridiculous excess; for, in course, having such a friend, it was the man's interest to do his best. A good many gentlemen whose houses I visits at, is patrons of the ring, but none of 'em ever admits the prize fighting fellers to their tables. I suppose, if my lord wins the grand steeple-chase that's coming off, he'll have his horse Clinker to dine and lodge with him."

"And, if he were to do so," observed I, "he would have a precedent in a greater person than himself, who made his horse a magistrate."

Of this remark Mr. Ruggles took no notice,

probably, because he was not sufficiently acquainted with classic history to understand the allusion. I could not help expressing my surprise that Lord Lancashire and his friends should have committed so many daring outrages, and yet have escaped with impunity; but Mr. Ruggles assured me that it was no use opposing them, for the experiment had been attempted and failed.

“It isn’t like, you know, sir, as if it was poor people, who’d have been transported, and sent to the treadmill twenty times over, for the riots my lord and them has kicked up. But when a man has got a matter of fifty thousand a-year to back un, it’s totally a different thing; though, at the same time, I agree with you, they didn’t ought to do such things; it certainly is coming it a little too strong. Now I’ll tell you a case in pint, which your mention of the circumstance just put into my head. There was a lawyer chap from London, — Grimbitch, or Grimditch, — Grimditch, I think they called un, but I’m bad at minding names: however, this chap,

having made his fortin, came down to retire upon an estate which he bought, consisting of a comfortable little house, and about two hundred acres of land close to my lord's park-gate. It was reported down there, that Grimditch had bought the property dog-cheap, because nobody cared to live at a place where there was such a rummy neighbour. The lawyer, however, he boasted that if my lord and them offered to upset him, he'd tackle 'em, and dared 'em to try it on,—quite spicy! When this noos was carried to the Hall, it was unanimously agreed upon that this here lawyer should be abolished and eradicated, or summut, but the meaning of it was, that he was to be turned inside out! One was for tarring and feathering, another was for dragging through a horse-pond,—all sorts of inventions; but an Irish counsellor, of the name of Delany, what was of the party, got up and told 'em that they reminded him of his countryman, who, to spite a banker that they had a grudge against, got together a lot of his notes and burnt 'em, by which means the banker became

a rich man. 'In the same manner,' says he, 'if you set to milling this pettifogger, he'll make a good thing of it; I shouldn't a bit wonder if he had come down here on some such spekylation. Now,' says he, 'if so be you'll be guided by me, I'll sell him for a good price, and he shan't have the money. Damme,' says he, 'bang him with his own weapons, that's the headway of doing business with such a customer.' Soon as the words was spoken, my lord rose up and says, 'I seconds the motion of my learned friend, and vote that this here concern be trusted entirely to him, and I'm sure he will justify our confidence.' This was carried by acclamation, and the counsellor, who had the gift of the gab, and no mistake, made a reg'lar speech, just like a book; I can't mind it all, but it was to return thanks, and to tell 'em that he should do all as laid in his power to earn their good opinion. And wasn't he as good as his word, that's all? My eye! Talk about niggers! what have they got to do with all this here poor devil of a six-and-eight-penny had to stand? He was no

match for the counsellor, no more than a rat is for a ferret. It would take me a week to tell you how they sarved un out. Once they sent un a letter, in the name of one of his former customers, a gentleman of fortin down in Kent, saying that he was very ill, and that as his family had disoblighd him, he meant to alter his will, and begged him to come immediately. So off he sets, four posters all the way, thinking he was going to step into a good thing, no less. This was one of the sells. Another time they put his death in the papers, and an advertisement to call his debts in. But what made me laugh more than all, was a parcel they sent un. I can't mind half the things as was in it, but such rubbidge you never saw ; dead cats, stale fish, donkey's bowels, buckets of slush, paving stones, to make it 'eavy, all the rakings and scrapings of hell, there was. Then there was images togged out in caps and gowns, — judges by George. Then come a letter, and of all the low-lived discourses ever I see, that beat all. Then there was a pictur worse than the letter. This here parcel, they

had marked 'with care,' and sent up from Bristol. The carriage come to two pun ten, and Grimditch took it in, thinking, I suppose, from the size and weight, that it was valuable property. All he could do, he couldn't trace none of these things to the Hall, that is, to prove it, you know, for, in course, he knew perfectly well where they come from. At last he was so exasperated, that he put a paragraph in the county newspaper, describing the whole history of the proceedings, and pinting, pretty plainly, to my lord and the rest; though he didn't mention names. But the counsellor's down upon him again like a pickaxe. Soon as he see the paragrapht, he drops the editor a call; and, 'Pray, sir,' says he 'who is the author of this here scand'lous paragrapht,' says he. 'I must beg to decline telling of you,' says he. 'Oh! very well,' says he, 'then I beg to give you notice, that it is the intention of the Marquess of Lancashire, and the other gentlemen insinuated in that paragrapht, to bring a action against you, for defamation of character.' When he heard that, the editor, to save himself, imme-

diately gave up his friend. The consequence was, that the counsellor brought Grimbitch into court, and drewed him for fifty pounds damages, which was handed over to the poor debtors in the county gaol. After this, he was so beat out of his pace, that he couldn't come again. There he was, reg'larly done, flabbergasted, flummoxed, and pasted. He told one of our people, that life was a burden to un, and damned if I didn't pretty nigh pity un, though he was a lawyer. However, in a very short time, he made his lucky, sold the place, and was never heard of no more."

The conclusion of this anecdote brought us to our destination, which we entered with a shout that effectually dispersed the gentle slumbers which had been stealing over the senses of the weary waiters. Broiled bones and devils were ordered, and shortly provided, for the entertainment of the select party, already enumerated. It would have been difficult to decide which flowed most freely, the champagne, or the conversation, but each promoted the other. After the cloth was removed, a bowl of bishop

was ordered, and a jug of rum punch, for the especial refreshment of Mr. Scroggs, who greatly affected that beverage.

If the reader has indulged in any brilliant anticipations of this supper, he will, I regret to say, experience disappointment; for, in truth, I have no very clear recollection of what passed, and the little that my memory does retain, is not of a very edifying character. The evening ended in a row, (*quorum pars fui*, as I am ashamed to confess,) which occasioned the smashing of a policeman, and the ultimate consignment of the whole party to the watchhouse. By the newspaper police report of the following day, it appeared that six gentlemen, who gave their names, Smith, Jones, Brown, White, Johnson, and Williams, were severally fined five shillings for being drunk, and five pounds for the damage and repair of a peace-officer.

CHAPTER X.

SWEETING and myself, impelled by the better part of valour, had withdrawn from the *mêlée* when we found the tide of victory turning in favour of the civil force. It might be very well for noblemen, and gentlemen of independent circumstances to brave the penalties of the law, but it would not do for persons in our situation of life, who had characters to maintain. Nevertheless, in justice to my friend and myself, lest any ill-natured construction should be put upon our flight, I must say, that we did our duty while we were in action. Sweeting rushed to the rescue, when Lord Lancashire was sore pressed by three policemen, and beat them off; and though, unfortunately, a similar opportunity did not present itself to me of signalizing my valour, yet no man could

more vehemently applaud the gallantry of his companions, and encourage their exertions, than I did. The impetuous onslaught of our noble leader, the cool courage and conduct of the Chicken, and the tremendous effect with which the massive form of Ruggles bore down upon our foes, were successively extolled by me ; and, though my position in the rear precluded me from emulating their achievements, I can safely say, that not a particle of envy on that account, found admission to my breast.

The next day, my versatile friend was at his post, all dimpled smiles, as usual, and looking as if he had not a thought beyond silks and satins. He exhibited no signs of the preceding night's debauch, save the mark of Lord Lancashire's fist upon his upper lip, and, as the cut was gracefully covered by a longitudinal piece of court-plaster, it passed for a slip of the razor, and added to, rather than detracted from, the interest of his countenance.

As I became more habituated to the society of this person, my distrust of him gradually wore away. The laxity of his morals, he

made little or no attempt to conceal, but he seemed at bottom to be a good fellow, and, though he considered flats to be the fair prey of men of talent, yet he often declared, with emphasis, that no consideration would ever induce him to "hand over" his pal, or his private friend, and his conduct in his professional capacity, and in his relation to Mr. Coventry Stapleton, seemed to prove that he acted on this principle. Of his zeal for the interests of the employers upon whom, ostensibly, his livelihood depended, I have given a curious instance in the last chapter but one; and I believe him to have been equally worthy of the confidence of the other party with whom he was connected.

Mr. Sweeting had a mother and two sisters, resident in the neighbourhood of the Regent's Park, touching whom, his brother shopmen delighted to retail some very scandalous anecdotes. To these ladies, after we had been some time on terms of intimacy, my friend offered to introduce me, and intimated in so doing, that he was conferring upon me a par-

ticular mark of favour. I assured him that I appreciated it as such, and gladly availed myself of the flattering distinction.

The style in which these people lived was so far above their apparent condition in life, that it seemed to countenance the reports which prevailed respecting their moral character. The manners, education, and accomplishments of the young ladies, were little, if at all, below the average of provincial fashion. Their conversation was refined and elegant, but the society at their house at once explained their position and pursuits. Titular matrons, actresses of unfaded charms, but tarnished reputations, damsels highly dressed, or barely dressed at all, with brilliant complexions and eloquent eyes, officers of the Guards, booby youths, and middle-aged men about town; such was the description of the society, — pleasant, gentle reader, but wrong.

Miss Sweeting was a tall, commanding figure, finely proportioned, and arrived at full maturity. She sang superbly, and swept the strings of the harp with the majestic grace of a Py-

thensess. Isabella, the second sister, who appeared to be some years younger, was in a different style. Her figure was smaller and more delicate, with a soft, languishing air, and large, dark, luxurious eyes. The youngsters, for the most part, gathered round Miss Sweeting, while the grey-haired *roués* devoted themselves to Isabella.

Lord Reginald Lofty was the most prominent of the admirers of Teresa. He never quitted her side while she played and sung, and, when others engaged her attention, he would stand staring at her, until his goggle eyes showed something like feeling and intelligence. The lady, perfectly aware of her influence, managed him with great skill, keeping him off and on, sometimes flattering his love, and anon, exciting his jealousy. From the first evening I saw them together, I suspected her of deep designs; for why should she take so much trouble about a temporary conquest? Others viewed the matter in the same light; as was manifest from certain nods, winks, and shrugs. In fact, it soon wore such an appear-

ance of probability, that the sporting men who frequented the house began to lay out money upon it, the highest odds being three to two against Miss Sweeting becoming Lady Reginald Lofty before the expiration of six months ; even, on that event, against Lord Jersey winning the Derby ; and only ten to one, about the double event. One very sporting bet was made, of a thousand pounds to a pony, about Miss Sweeting being Duchess of Gosport, to which title Lord Reginald was presumptive heir, and the eldest brother was supposed to be consumptive.

Business was doing at these prices, when a rumour arose that the odds had been taken for Sweeting to a large amount, and that Coventry Stapleton, (who was supposed to be a confidential friend of the lady,) stood in. On inquiry, there seemed every reason to believe that the report was well-founded. Such a proceeding, by parties so closely connected with the stable, as it were, caused, of course, a great revolution in the odds. It was asserted, in some quarters, that a secret marriage

had already taken place. Be that as it may, the event was now backed at three to one, (takers shy,) and several people hedged their money. Others, however, who considered themselves rather more awake than the rest of the world, shook their heads, smiled mysteriously, and would make no alteration in their books.

CHAPTER XI.

LORD REGINALD LOFTY, notwithstanding the caution of his friend, the Marquess of Lancashire, continued to repose his confidence in Mr. Sweeting, who seemed every day to gain more influence over him. This young man, be it observed, independently of his contingent prospects, had an estate of some four thousand per annum, which he inherited from his mother, and was, therefore, a prize of no ordinary magnitude. His passion for horse-racing was in an inverse ratio to his capacity for that recondite pursuit; and, upon the whole, his intelligence and acumen were somewhat below par. The possible alliance between his sister and this young nobleman was a subject too delicate for Sweeting to touch upon, nor did I ever hear him make the slightest allusion

to it, but my own penetration sufficed to discover that it was the object nearest his heart ; whether from the ambition of aggrandizing his family, or the view of getting his lordship more absolutely within his power and control, I do not pretend to say. With this ulterior object, no doubt, he flattered the lordling with delusive notions of his skill in betting, and allowed him to win several sums, which, had he been only a casual customer, would never have found their way into his pocket.

For my own part, I had been so much accustomed to see and hear of men much wiser and more experienced than Lord Reginald Lofty, committing such follies, that I thought his marriage with Miss Sweeting a matter hardly out of the probable course of things. I endeavoured, therefore, to recommend myself to the young lady's good graces, on the principle, that it is always desirable to make friends, especially with people who are likely to rise in the world. Who knew, I once argued with myself, in an idle reverie, that I might not, some time, occupy a high post in the house-

hold of his Grace of Gosport? nay, be numbered among his chaplains, and hold one of the numerous fat livings in his gift? for I had often entertained serious thoughts of taking orders. And let not the reader smile at such fantasies. Men who have drawn their first breath in St. Giles's, have expired at Lambeth and Whitehall; and a little *sous* lieutenant of artillery, whose day-dreams once soared to the sovereignty of Jerusalem, lived to sway the sceptre of half the civilized world!

Musing upon these things, a suggestion occurred to me, upon which, after due deliberation, I resolved to act; a proceeding which may, perhaps, give rise to a difference of opinion among my readers, some of whom will be disposed to think it much to my credit, while others will regard it as savouring of treachery and breach of friendship. It appeared to me then, that, notwithstanding the advantages which might redound to myself from the union of Miss Sweeting with Lord Reginald, that it was the duty of one who had eaten the bread of noble families, not to pro-

mote, nay, to do anything in his power to prevent, such a *mésalliance*. I embraced, therefore, the magnanimous resolution of waiting upon his Grace the Duke of Gosport, and acquainting him with the misfortune which was likely to befall his son ; and, in the event of my being the means of saving a member of an illustrious house from contamination, I was content to trust to their generosity to indemnify me for any selfish sacrifices which I might have made in frustrating a consummation so much to be deprecated. And I beg leave to remind those who may be inclined to censure my conduct in this matter, that I distinctly declined the confidence of Mr. Sweeting in any of his gambling speculations, intending to hold myself a free agent ; and, accordingly, I had received no intimation from himself of this matrimonial scheme, nor had I any positive knowledge of its existence. I went only upon public rumour and my own observation.

Some persons would have been daunted by the difficulty of getting access to such a great man, and his attention to such a story, coming

from an obscure and, almost, anonymous quarter ; but I was none of those. Having made up my mind to see the Duke, I never entertained a doubt of being able to effect that object, and very little that I should succeed in alarming his fears.

CHAPTER XII.

My first step was, according to my custom, to collect information respecting the character and habits of his Grace. The accounts which I received of him were, at first blush, rather formidable. He was everywhere represented as a very weak and very proud man. He had some time since prevented the marriage of this very son with the object of his choice, a beautiful and amiable girl, on account of some flaw in her family shield; and had forced his only daughter into the arms of a disagreeable old fellow of pedigree who wanted an heir; in consequence of which, soon after the birth of the said heir, the marchioness, (for such was her rank,) entered into a base and criminal commerce with, and was ultimately united to, an agreeable young fellow, whose name, how-

ever, was not to be found in the aristocratic pages of Messrs. Collins and Debrett. His eldest son remained in single wretchedness at the age of thirty-five, because his father had not yet found among those young ladies who were willing to sacrifice bloom and beauty to sickness and deformity, for the sake of rank and riches, one of sufficient length of lineage to mate with the heir of the house of Lofty.

Any diffidence, therefore, which I might have felt in approaching a personage of such magnitude, was overcome by the idea of the value of the service I was about to render him—a service which he would no doubt consider analogous, if not equal to, that of a hero or statesman, who, by some extraordinary act of patriotic valour or wisdom, has saved his country.

I repaired, therefore, straightway to his Grace's mansion, which was enclosed from the vulgar gaze by a high wall or screen surrounding the court-yard, and requested the porter to cause it to be made known to the Duke that a person wished to speak to him on impor-

tant business. This burly retainer, after surveying me from head to foot, informed me that I might tell my business to him, and upon my peremptorily declining to do so, not perhaps without some appearance of contempt, he slammed the gate against me, referring me at the same time to a place which it is not considered manners to name to ears polite. Though at first somewhat disconcerted at this rebuff, I soon regained my self-possession, seeing that in my eagerness to arrive at my point, I had not gone to work with sufficient circumspection. My next step, therefore, was to address a respectful letter to his Grace, soliciting an interview, as I had something to communicate fit only for his private ear, and offering to give him satisfaction, should he think proper to require the same, previously to granting my request, as to the respectability of my character. In answer to this, I received the next day a note from his Grace's secretary, informing me that his Grace could not think of receiving a person of whom he knew nothing, and that he, the secretary, was ready

to receive my communication either personally or by letter. This also I refused, and pressed for an audience of the Duke himself; in consequence of which, I learned, (some years afterwards,) that his Grace was in great perturbation, and even apprehended that I had a design upon his person. Men, he said, in his station, were liable to secret foes, and could not be too cautious. Besides, he had lately in his place in parliament passed some severe strictures on the Government of the United States, and who knew but some profligate citizen of the Union, possibly with the connivance of the President, might be lying in wait for him? Nay, in these democratic days, some political club might have secretly planned the removal of such a staunch and formidable enemy to their revolutionary designs—a leading member of the aristocratic order, and one of the pillars of the monarchy. In fact, his Grace worked himself into such a panic, that he sent for the chief magistrate of police, laid my letter before him, and asked his advice. Upon the whole circumstances, however, the magistrate

was of opinion that no violence was intended, but that some attempt at imposition was contemplated, and advised that the letter writer should be granted an audience, his person being previously scrutinized by an experienced officer of the establishment, who should be stationed within call during the interview. In conformity with this opinion, it seemed, I was summoned to wait upon his Grace at a day and hour appointed.

Utterly innocent of all these alarms and precautions, I attended punctually to his Grace's order, and after having answered a few mysterious, irrelevant, and utterly unintelligible questions put by a respectable man, who did not seem, however, to belong to the household, I was kept waiting in an antechamber about ten minutes, and then ushered into the presence of the great man himself. I found him seated behind a huge library-table, his flank protected by a bookcase, and his rear by the wall.

When I had advanced a few paces into the room, the Duke signified by a hasty motion of his hand, that I was not to approach nearer.

I made a profound obeisance, and his Grace honoured me with an attentive examination of my features before he spoke. He then arranged himself in his seat, cleared his throat, and after what might be supposed to be the fashion of a minister of state examining a suspected state criminal, addressed me as follows.

“Young man,” said he, referring to a paper which lay on the table before him, “your name, I believe, is Samuel Wiggin, or Wiggins?”

“*Simon Wiggins*, my Lord Duke,” answered I.

“*Simon?*” repeated the Duke, with some surprise. “I understood that your name was *Samuel*; I understood that you gave that name to the person who interrogated you before you were brought into this room. Are you sure, sir, that your name is Simon? Are you quite sure that it is not Samuel?”

“Quite positive, please your Grace,” was my reply.

“A very extraordinary discrepancy,” muttered his Grace; then consulting another paper,

“ I perceive,” said he, “ that in the letter that you thought proper to address to me, you sign yourself only ‘ S. Wiggins.’ Now S, may denote either Samuel or Simon. *I shall confront you, sir, with Mr. Dobbs.*”

I remained unmoved at this intimation, and his Grace ringing a small hand-bell, ordered the servant, who answered the summons, to call Mr. Dobbs, who forthwith attended, and turned out, as I had expected, to be the person who had questioned me, before I was introduced to the presence chamber.

“ Mr. Dobbs,” said his Grace, “ what is this person’s name ?”

“ Samuel Wiggins, my Lord Duke.”

“ He has just declared,” said his Grace, with a severe glance at me, “ that his christian name is *Simon*.”

“ *Simon*, I meant, my Lord Duke,” said the police-officer, (for such he was,) taking the word out of his Grace’s mouth, “ now I think of it, the young man did say *Simon*.”

“ Then, sir, how came you to report to me

that his name was Samuel?" demanded the Duke, with some heat.

"I'm very sorry, my Lord, it was my mistake; but it's no consequence, your Grace."

"No consequence!" echoed the Duke of Gosport and Newhaven, Marquess and Earl of Tilbury, Vicount Lofty and a baronet. "No consequence!" cried the great man, with a look which ought to have calcinated the audacious policeman. "Do you presume to tell me that it is no *consequence* to mislead—and—and—deceive—and—and—and—confuse me by false information? Your superior shall hear of this, sir, your chief shall hear of this. You may withdraw:

Mr. Dobbs bowed, and turned on his heel, cocking his eye at me as he left the room. The incensed magnate, as soon as he had recovered his equanimity, turned to me, and with grave politeness apologized for having treated me with, in this instance, unfounded suspicion; he then proceeded to examine me touching my kindred, my habits, my profession or call-

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avow any intention of saying anything which may be painful or unpleasant to your feelings. You may, possibly, be a very respectable person, according to your station in life,—I say nothing against that: but what I do say is this,—what Mr. Simon Wiggins can have to say which it imports the Duke of Gosport to know—I have yet to learn.”

And as he thus spoke, the noble Duke threw himself back in his chair, and half closed his eyes, with the air of a man who was accustomed to public speaking. In fact, like many others, who are unencumbered with a multiplicity of ideas, his Grace had a great flow of words, which he was in the habit of turning on in a certain august assembly, to the great annoyance of cabinet ministers, clerks, reporters, &c. who were obliged to abide the infliction.

I was so much piqued and disgusted by all this folly and impertinence, that I felt more than half disposed to abandon my design, as I heartily repented having undertaken it. But a few moments consideration determined me

to persevere, as I still expected, when my intelligence (of which the Duke had evidently no conception,) should be revealed, that the value of my services would be acknowledged. I proceeded, therefore, to open the important secret, and in a style which I thought would propitiate him.

“My Lord Duke,” said I, “your Grace may be assured that I should not have presumed to intrude myself upon your attention in any concern of a trifling nature. Nothing but the natural interest which every true Englishman must feel in the honour of an illustrious house, should have prompted me to this step. My Lord Duke, the matter upon which I have to speak, relates to a noble member of your Grace’s family.”

The Duke elevated his eyebrows. “To whom, sir, and to what do you refer!” said he, slowly and with impressive dignity.

“To the Lord Reginald Lofty, may it please your Grace, and to his lordship’s reported marriage.”

“Marriage!” exclaimed the Duke, half ris-

ing from his chair; "what do you mean, man?"

"I mean, my Lord Duke," answered I firmly, "to draw your Grace's attention to a rumour, which has probably not reached your Grace's ears, but which I have personal opportunities of knowing is not to be treated with contempt. There is every reason to suspect, my Lord Duke, that your second son is about to contract an alliance with a lady not only far beneath his lordship's station, but of questioned reputation."

The Duke fixed his eyes steadfastly upon me for nearly a minute, drew two or three hard breaths, and then delivered himself.

"If it were possible," said he, "to jest upon such a subject, I should think you were sent here to insult me. Upon what grounds, sir, do you make such a statement as that which you have just now made; from what facts and inferences, sir, do you feel warranted in coming to the conclusion, that my son, and the heir presumptive to the titles and estates of which I am the present possessor, contemplates a matrimo-

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inquiry on the subject. But weighing your unsupported story against the probability of a member of the house of Lofty being capable of such an act as that, of which you impute to him the contemplation — weighing, I say, the one against the other, you will not feel surprised or aggrieved, when I tell you, that my impression is totally adverse to the truth of your statement. I firmly believe it will be found upon investigation, that you and your associates, either from an incapacity to comprehend the habits and modes of thinking and acting of your superiors; or from that levelling principle unhappily so prevalent in these days, which leads the lower orders to depreciate and calumniate the upper classes; or from some other motive, which I will not pretend to divine; either that you have altogether invented this specious tale, or that you have put this serious and preposterous construction upon one of those casual and temporary alliances with females of inferior condition in life, (and I do not wish to be understood by any means as defending the practice,) which young men of Lord Regi-

nald Lofty's rank and fashion are sometimes tempted to form : I feel bound, therefore, Mr. Simon Wiggins, in justice and candour, to tell you that I give no credence to your story ; but if, contrary to all probability, it should prove to be well founded, you will of course receive such an acknowledgment, as your laudable zeal for the honour of an illustrious house may seem to deserve. Sir, I wish you a good morning."

So saying, his Grace made me a stiff bow, in token that the interview was at an end. I bowed in return, and was meditating some remarks in answer to what had fallen from his Grace, when he rung the bell, and I was ushered out of the room, internally, nay, almost audibly cursing my own impertinent interference, and the egregious pride and folly of the ridiculous, stilted mortal whose presence I had left. This proceeding was just of a piece with my Quixotic attempt to reform Mr. Fosberry's household, and received, and perhaps deserved, the same fate. In this instance, I had one consolation, however, that if I had taken no-

thing, I should lose nothing by my motion, having obtained the Duke's promise to keep my secret, which was perfectly safe in his custody; for, with all his foibles, everybody conceded to his Grace the character of a scrupulously veracious and chivalrously honourable man.

CHAPTER XIII.

NOTWITHSTANDING that I gave up all hopes of any benefit accruing to the illustrious house of Lofty, or to my own peculiar, from my well-meant attempt in their behalf, a natural curiosity prompted me to make inquiry respecting the course which the sagacious Duke had thought proper to take in consequence of my information. The result of my inquiries was tantamount to what I had expected. It seemed that his Grace, feeling himself withheld by a scruple of pride and delicacy from requiring of his son a direct denial of charges, coming from a quarter so obscure and mean, had communicated my statement to a friend, and requested him to hint the matter to Lord Reginald, with strict injunctions, however, not to let his lordship for a moment suppose that

his father required from him any formal denial of the report, still less any particulars relative to the lady, or his connection with her, if such a connection existed. The slightest expression of contempt for the idle calumny would be perfectly satisfactory to him. The friend who undertook this errand was a man of sense, and having himself heard rumours which seemed to corroborate my story, so far exceeded his instructions as to require from the youth his word of honour that he had no intention of marrying without his father's consent. This Lord Reginald not only gave without hesitation, but even confirmed it—very unnecessarily in the opinion of the gentleman, who, like his principal, was a man of the strictest honour—with several oaths and imprecations. Nay, more, he reviled the lady particularly alluded to in very gross terms, coupling her name with epithets, in which there might have been more of truth than there was of politeness. This, however, was entirely satisfactory to the friend, who made such a report to the Duke, as completely set his Grace's mind at

confidentially coming friend of his conversation from his lordship's lodge had myself been there and interpreting them. In fact, if I had have been strongly against an event, "booked" as next

I was the more had been hurried from this time. Less frequent visits when he did come to avoid the appearance, appeared to for the neglect of

from my thoughts, when I became interested, and to a far greater extent, in another of a similar description. But this requires a little preliminary explanation. The reader, then, will be pleased to recollect that the establishment of which I was a servant, consisted of two partners. Mr. Hutchins, the senior name in the firm, was the son and successor of the founder of the house, who, by the industry of forty years, had raised it from an obscure business in a back street, to be a first-rate concern.

The young man having evinced a propensity to pleasure, which did not seem very likely to forward what, in the old gentleman's eyes, appeared to be the first object, and perhaps the only rational pursuit, of life, namely, the accumulation of wealth, had bequeathed the property to his son, under certain restrictions, the principal of which was, that only a portion, and that a very small one, should be withdrawn from trade until after the expiration of a certain period, under penalty of forfeiting a moiety of the whole.

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man into partnership, and retired from the active management of the business to an elegant villa at Wimbledon; young master was sent to Oxford, and miss was consigned to a fashionable seminary for young ladies. This change took place about five years before I entered the establishment, and at that period; Mr. Frederick Hutchins had just returned from college, with a great knowledge of coats and cravats, horses and high-life; and Miss Almeria had been turned out of the *finishing* institution with about the same amount of moral and intellectual accomplishments which young ladies usually carry away from such places.

Mr. Hooper, the junior partner, was about sixty years of age at the time of his promotion, and though not possessed of the brilliant qualities of his successor, Mr. Sweeting, he had some solid merits which frequently answer the same purpose.

Entering as an errand boy into the establishment, he had been advanced for his industry and good conduct, and acquired the entire

confidence of old Mr. Hutchins, who, besides two thousand pounds, absolutely bequeathed him the contingent reversion of the bulk of his property, in case of his son committing any breach of the conditions under which he was to inherit it. He devolved also, to the integrity of Mr. Hooper, the sole guardianship of the person and the pecuniary interests of that son during his minority, which was not to expire until his twenty-fifth year. So well did he justify the confidence of his patron, that when he rendered the accounts of his trust after three years' management, the profits of the estate were found to have increased considerably on the average of the same preceding period. His salutary influence over the youth and inexperience of his principal continued until the marriage of the latter, when his wife, jealous of the control which he exercised over her spouse, prejudiced him against that trusty friend and servant, who was not restored to favour until Mrs. Hutchins, who knew his value, and was not fool enough to indulge her jealous feelings to the detriment of her husband's interests, recommended that

he should be taken into partnership, when they were about to take their Icarian flight into the regions of high life.

At the time, then, when I entered the house, Mr. Hooper was its efficient head; Mr. Hutchins, indeed, would drive up in his tilbury once a week, on pretence of doing business; but the junior partner really directed the whole concern. Mr. Hooper, unlike his colleague, lived among his equals, and in a style becoming the condition of a substantial tradesman. I was sometimes admitted to his table, at which Sweeting was a frequent and favoured guest. This man, who possessed in a remarkable degree the talent of adapting himself to his company, had recommended himself to the good graces of Mr. Hooper, by his activity and address in business; and though his employer regretted that he was somewhat addicted to gaiety, but doubted not that this foible would be cured by time, in which case, he was wont to predict that Sweeting would rise to great eminence in the mercantile community, — he had not the remotest idea of the radical profligacy of his

foreman; for it was said that a growing attachment between this person and his only daughter, was observed and regarded by Mr. Hooper with no unfriendly eye. Knowing my friend Sweeting's calculating character, I thought it highly probable that he looked upon the only child of a man like Hooper, who was supposed, independently of his share in the house, to have a few thousands in the funds, to be no bad speculation. The accidental attributes of beauty, amiability, and good sense, which this young lady likewise

CHAPTER XIV.

AT Mr. Hooper's house, I sometimes met my kind friends Tibbetts and his consort; and these, with the exception of an occasional Sunday dinner in Doughty Street, were the only opportunities I had of intercourse with them. Lady Tott and Mr. Hooper were old friends, and in introducing me to him, I found that she had not entered into any particulars of my history, merely describing me as a person long known and highly esteemed by her husband, and though unfortunate and imprudent in earlier life, yet possessed of capabilities to make a figure, if duly encouraged and judiciously patronized. Mr. Hooper was satisfied with this character, and neither to my friends nor to myself did he ever make any inquiries as to the circumstances of my past life over

which it was wished to cast a veil. He received me from the first into his family circle, invited me more frequently when he knew me better, kindly commended my services, and with the charity of a man who had ever been himself irreproachable, declared, not directly to me, but to others, through whom his sentiments would reach me, that he never considered former errors of themselves any disqualification for subsequent credit and confidence. Had my youth been committed to a Hooper instead of a Smallcombe, my career had probably been

advantage of his hospitality in paying my addresses to his daughter, for whom I was in no respect a match; but on mentioning these scruples one day, when dining with my city friends, they treated them very lightly, assuring me, that the principal requisites to which Mr Hooper would look in the husband of his daughter, would be character and industry. They had heard him say so a hundred times, and, therefore, urged me strongly to prefer my claim. I objected the presumption of a shopman lifting up his eyes to his master's daughter and heiress, and such a charming, superior creature! but Lady Tott still laughed at my diffidence.

"All stuff and nonsense!" said she: "I suppose Mary Hooper is but flesh and blood, like other people. And as to your inequality, what's that got to do with it? Look at me and Tibbetts. The liking, I tell you, does away with all that difference."

Mr. Tibbetts cordially supported these sentiments. "How should I ever have got my lady, there," argued he, "if I had stood shilly-shally; and you don't mean to compare your

girl to her, I suppose, no more than I mean to call myself such a topping nob as you. Damme, old comrade, (excuse me for swearing, my dear little darling,) I wish you joy of your look-out, with all my heart and soul. Here's a bumper to your success." He suited the action to the word, and, rising from his chair, shook hands with me across the table. "Stick up to her, as my lady says, and so say I. Faint heart never won fair lady. Once you marry Miss Hooper, you know, there you are landed; and dash my wig! if I think you need envy nobody, hardly even me,—Need he, my sweet little duck?" And in the joy of his heart, the amorous Tibbetts commenced a dalliance with his amiable lady, who, however, promptly repulsed his ill-timed caresses.

"I wonder, Tibbetts," said she, "you can make such a hass of yourself, before the young man, and all. Keep off, will ye?"

"Why, chucky," answered her lively lord, who was always very affectionate in his cups, "you know you're my little pet, you know you are."

“ I know your a fool, so let 's have no more of it ; or I 'll hit you, 'pon my life I will.”

Mr. Tibbetts obeyed with a languishing leer and a sentimental sigh, and Lady Tott, after apologizing to me for her husband's ridiculous behaviour, resumed the discussion of my affairs, and gave me so much encouragement to prosecute my suit with Miss Hooper, that I went home that evening with a gayer heart than I had known for many, many years.

CHAPTER XV.

THERE was one point, though, perhaps, of minor consideration, upon which my friends failed in allaying my doubts and apprehensions. As I became more interested in the favourable opinion of Miss Hooper, the assiduities of Sweeting in the same quarter gave me very deep concern. Though I fancied that the young lady showed a marked preference for my conversation, I had many anxious moments on this account. The personal advantages of the foreman, his insinuating manners, the gaiety and confidence of his address, would have made even a less modest person than myself feel nervous as to his ultimate success against such competition. The reflection from which I derived most comfort was, that, notwithstanding a good start, he did not seem to have made

the progress that might have been expected, and I hoped that, in this instance, he would be beat by his overweening confidence. I sometimes thought, as I narrowly watched the manner and countenance of Miss Hooper when Sweeting was talking to her, that she betrayed symptoms of disgust at his insolent attentions, and that she conducted herself towards him with a reserve which I had not noticed in the commencement of my acquaintance with her. But woman is a variable and unintelligible creature. A sudden gust of caprice will, in a moment, scatter to the winds a lover's long cherished hopes. Nay, she will frequently lavish smiles and honeyed words upon an indifferent object, and, by her coldness and contempt, chill the very man upon whom her heart's warmest affections are fixed. In a word, reader, I was desperately in love ; an avowal, which will supersede the necessity of many more such profound remarks as the foregoing, and, probably, convey to his, or her mind, a much clearer idea of the state of mine, than any description, however elaborate, could impart.

Mr. Sweeting himself seemed to entertain no suspicion that I was likely to supplant or rival him in the affections of Miss Hooper. Whether he thought that those affections were securely at his command, or that I had no chance against his talents and accomplishments, certain it is, that he betrayed no uneasiness when I engaged the attention of that young lady, nor in any way showed the slightest jealousy of, or diminution of friendship for me. Nay, he went so far as to own to me in confidence, that he had views of a matrimonial nature in that direction, but was uncertain whether he should carry them into effect. Though provoked at his insolence, I did not feel quite comfortable living on terms of intimacy with a man towards whom I could not but feel that I was playing a somewhat treacherous part. But what was I to do? The candid and manly course would, no doubt, have been openly to declare myself his rival; for, in fact, he had no claims upon my forbearance; but, as I had not moral courage to do this, I took every precaution to conceal my design from his ob-

servation. On this account, I did violence to my inclinations by still occasionally accompanying him to those haunts of dissipation which he frequented, lest my entire absence from them, after having frequently visited them in his society, should awaken his suspicion. I had never heartily entered into the spirit of such extravagant scenes as I have attempted to describe in a former chapter, but, now that my mind was occupied by better things, they were absolutely disgusting to me. It was with exceeding repugnance, therefore, that, after a delightful evening at Mr. Hooper's, during which I had all but made a declaration to my beloved Mary, I found myself involved in one of my Lord Lancashire's parties for the ensuing day. It was to be a dinner given to him by a numerous party of his friends and admirers, and as Sweeting now professed himself one of these, he made a point of my attendance, as, in consequence of some very illiberal remarks upon his lordship, which had recently appeared in the public prints, they were anxious to muster as strong as possible, to vindicate the freedom.

of a British peer against the scandalous attacks of the press.

The dinner was at the Albion, and was furnished, regardless of expense, with all the delicacies of the season. Upwards of thirty sat down to table. Mr. Scroggs, (the Hampshire Chicken,) was in the chair, supported on his right by the Marquess of Lancashire, and on his left by the Lord Reginald Lofty. After the cloth was removed, the Chairman rose to propose the health of his Majesty, which was succeeded by the usual routine of loyal and

of your kind support in the task which I've undertaken,—it is one which far exceeds my humble abilities,—though it requires no powerful helegance to recommend to you the toast which I am about to propose. Gim'men, I am about to propose to you a toast which requires no pre-face. (Hear, hear!) Gim'men, charge your glasses. Are you charged? Gim'men, the toast which I am 'bout to propose, is the 'ealth of our hillustrious guest, the Marquess of Lancashire. Nine times nine! Hip — hip — hip — hur-rah!"

The cheering lasted for about a quarter of an hour, and after it had subsided, a shout was raised for "one cheer more," which lasted about five minutes. There was then a dead silence, and all eyes were directed towards Lord Lancashire, who was no sooner observed to be rising from his seat, than the applause again broke out, and lasted about ten minutes. His lordship was, at length, permitted to address the company, which he did to the following effect.

"Gentlemen, I feel very much obliged by

the kindness with which you have received the mention of my name. But as I don't pretend to have much of the gift of the gab, (great laughter,) you must not expect any jaw ; I leave that to my friend here, (pointing to the counsellor,) whose trade it is. (Roars of laughter.) He will not, I am sure, feel offended at my remark. (Hear, hear ! from Mr. Delany.) Gentlemen, you are aware that my conduct, and the conduct of a great many gentlemen and friends whom I see around me, on this occasion, has been commented on, in the most unwarrantable manner, by a portion of the public press of this metropolis. (Loud cries of hear !) Gentlemen, we are charged with being systematic violators of the public peace, — with being a nuisance to society, — with celebrating our drunken orgies, — drunken orgies, gentlemen ! (Sensation.) Now, gentlemen, I think I shall speak the unanimous sentiments of all of you, (hear, hear, hear !) all your unanimous sentiments, as well as my own, in throwing back these false and calumnious imputations with the utmost scorn and contempt upon their

vile authors. (Great cheering.) Gentlemen, I regard this as a flagrant attack upon the liberty of the subject. (Hear, hear, hear!) Gentlemen, I am no politician, but as an Englishman, (cheers,) as half an Irishman, (hear, hear! from Mr. Delany,) and as connected also with Scotland, (hear! from Mr. Sweeting,) in short, as a member of the Imperial Parliament, and one of the hereditary guardians of the constitution, I feel it my duty to enter my humble protest against this insidious attack on free-born Britons—this unprovoked invasion of the sanctity of private life.”

The noble Marquess sat down amidst loud and long-continued cheering. When this had subsided, his lordship again rose, to propose the health of the Chairman, upon whose professional character and private virtues he passed a high eulogy; happily contrasting his fair, open, straightforward style of hitting, with the cowardly, skulking assailant, who aims his envenomed shafts from behind a bush, an allusion which drew down great applause. His lordship took that opportunity, to announce that his

friend challenged all England, for from two to three hundred guineas a side, and that his money was ready any time, at the Hole in the Wall.

The toast was honoured with great enthusiasm, and the Chairman rose to return thanks, under the influence of strong emotion, after struggling with which for some moments, he expressed, in simple language, his gratitude to the company and his noble patron, whose flattering encomiums he returned in kind. He declared, also, his hearty concurrence in the severe strictures which the noble Marquess had passed on the literary warfare which had been commenced against them. He then entered into some details relative to the challenge which Lord Lancashire had announced, and concluded by proposing the health of his noble friend, Lord Reginald Lofty, which was drunk with all the honours, and his lordship returned thanks in a neat and appropriate speech. After two or three more healths had been given, sentiments were toasted, to one of which, namely, "Confusion to all spies," my Lord of Lancashire,

who was by this time "pretty forward," as Mr. Ruggles termed it, but as I should have said, exceedingly drunk, rose, and maintaining a perpendicular position with great difficulty, delivered himself to this effect.

"Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, I must apologize for again obtruding myself upon your notice. (Cries of no, no!) Well, then, I won't apologize — but I am anxious to say a few words. Gentlemen, information has just been conveyed to me that a person connected with the public press—a reporter, in short, has ~~sur~~—~~sur~~—surreptitiously found his way into this room, no doubt with some evil intent." (Who is he? who is he? turn him out! from several voices.) "Gentlemen, let us do nothing rashly; let us act with decorum and delibe—liberation. Gentlemen, this son of a—she-dog—I don't wish to be coarse, (hear, hear!) but I cannot de—designate him by any other epithet, I have reason to suspect, has been taking notes. (Great confusion.) Yes, gentlemen, taking notes of our proceedings in this room, with a view of showing us up in to-morrow's news-

paper. Gentlemen, will you stand this state of things?" (No, no, no, from all parts of the room.) "I thank you, I was sure you would respond to my appeal.—This is the proudest day of my life.—Gentlemen, before I proceed farther, I beg leave to move that the door be locked, and the key deposited with the Chair."

This motion was carried by acclamation, and of course immediately acted upon. The noble lord then resumed.

"I think, gentlemen, you will agree with me, that a signal example should be made of this rash intruder. I do not say that he should be actually doubled up, but I submit that he ought to be spificated."

This suggestion was received with loud applause, and all eyes were turned upon a visage, which, at the first allusion to this matter, had grown deadly pale, and had now assumed a yellow hue. Such a terror-stricken countenance could belong only to the unhappy subject of this denunciation. He did not attempt to deny himself, but starting up in desperation,

seized a knife with one hand, and snatching up the key which lay on the table with the other, made towards the door, swearing a solemn oath that he would plunge the weapon into the vitals of anybody who obstructed his progress. Lord Lancashire instantly sprang towards him, but was dragged back by his friends, and at the moment, the reporter had a chance of making good his escape, when the Chairman, undeterred by the brandished knife, coolly stepped up and knocked him down. The poor man lustily bawled out murder! but his vocal powers were immediately stopped by the insertion of a napkin into his mouth, and a resolute threat that something still more unpalatable should be substituted, if he attempted to make a noise. The debate as to the disposal of their victim was then resumed, and I listened to it with great interest, as I really was seriously apprehensive for his fate, considering the present frame of mind of his judges. I would have remonstrated, had I not doubted that my interference would do more harm than good. Some very brutal punishments were proposed,

and received with more or less approbation; but Mr. Delany, whose professional prudence was not quite drowned in the liquor which he had swallowed, strongly dissuaded his friends against any violence, and positively refused to concur in anything of the sort, as it would most assuredly involve them all in very serious legal penalties. This opinion of the counsellor's had considerable weight with most of the party, though Lancashire, and the more daring spirits, murmured at it as pusillanimous. After a lengthened and very noisy discussion, it was,

Lancashire House for the convenience of hunting drags, at night, through the streets of London. The gentleman of the press hearing this, could no longer restrain himself, but protested, *totis viribus*, against the scheme, alternately threatening his persecutors with the utmost rigour of the law, and imploring their mercy, for nothing could persuade him that he should not be torn in pieces by the ferocious dogs. His menaces, entreaties, and alarms, had no other effect than to cause shouts of laughter, in the midst of which, Lord Lancashire despatched one of the company for the beagles, with directions where to take them. Hackney-coaches were then called, into one of which they deposited their game, whose appeal to the waiters to rescue him as he was conveyed out of the house were utterly disregarded by those fellows, who seemed greatly to enjoy the sport. Lord Lancashire was accompanied by about a dozen of his friends on this extraordinary hunting expedition, the rest of the dinner party going a different way, probably from not being sportsmen, or from being

apprehensive of the consequences of such a proceeding. I joined the hunters, because I could not reconcile it to my conscience to leave the poor man in the hands of these reckless madcaps; for though he deserved a ducking, or a horsewhipping, I doubted whether the course about to be taken with him, was consistent with the resolution that had been carried against dangerous personal violence. I should have observed before, that the man had been recognized by one of the company as a scribbler, who was supposed chiefly to gain a livelihood by eaves-dropping for a scandalous Sunday print; and it proved, upon inquiry, that he had gained admission to the party through the introduction of a waiter, who had been induced to let him have a ticket, on his representation that he was a friend of Lord Lancashire's.

It had been arranged that the hounds should meet us at King's Cross, where we found them; and dismissing the coaches there, we proceeded without any attempt at resistance on the part of the spy, who was dumb with terror, to a

secluded spot at the western extremity of Pentonville. There the Marquess proceeded to announce the chase, but he did it in such a bungling manner, that Mr. Delany interposed.

“ My dear friend,” said he, “ I protest, as you know, against this proceeding altogether, and I wash my hands of the consequences. *But if the thing is to be done*, sure it’s as well to do it *properly*, and the way you’re going to work, Marquess, dear, will never do it at all.”

“ Damn it, then,” said the Marquess, handing his friend the perfume, “ manage it all your own way ; nobody can do it better.”

The learned gentleman then took the poor creature in hand and carefully impregnated his shoes, stockings, and the extremity of his trousers with the scent ; and having solemnly warned him, under penalty of death, to make no alarm in his progress, consoled him with the assurance that he should have fair play, and that if his wind and bottom were good, or if he knew of any *earth* in the neighbourhood, he might very possibly make his escape with-

out damage. No sooner was he liberated, than he set off at full speed, putting his nose in the direction of Paddington; and in less than five minutes, he was out of sight.

"Gone away!" shouted the counsellor, and laid on his hounds, who immediately owned it, and carried it down Winchester Street into the New Road, where they got upon better terms with him, and we had a capital burst up to Euston Square. Here, however, they overran it, and were cast back with great promptitude by Mr. Delany. This check let in the field,

hunter, Mr. D'Arcy and myself only being up, and we should have been left behind, had we not jumped into two cabs which happened to be left on a stand which we ran by. Mr. Delany proceeded to cast round the rubbish, in spite of the Marquess's opinion that he had *gone on*.

"He's here now, I'll pound it," said the hunter, and scarcely had he uttered the words, when D'Arcy roared "tally-ho!" and the varmint was viewed bolting from the other end of the stuff. Away then we went down Huntley Street, crossing Francis Street, through Chenies Street, and across Tottenham Court Road, where we got a holloa from a hackney-coachman just when we needed it, for the scent was getting bad. Here we got into another cramped country of lanes and allies, but the little hounds worked admirably, and at length we viewed him dead beat, getting over a wall about four feet high, at the back of a small house.

"Yoi over!" cried Lancashire, lashing the cab-horse to full speed down a flight of steps

out of a court. Over went the gallant little pack, and the Marquess was, I verily believe, about to put the cab at the wall, when Delany, who was just coming up from a different direction, perceiving his purpose, screamed out,

“ Hold hard ! you ’ll smash the hounds ! ”

Hearing this, he pulled up short, and jumping out of the vehicle, sprung over the wall, followed by D’Arcy, the huntsman, and myself.

“ Who—hoop to ground ! ” shouted Delany, seeing the dogs baying furiously at a closed door ; “ Tally-ho, tally-ho, tally-ho ! — who-hoop ! tally—ally—ally—ally—ally—ho ! ” finishing with a scream after the fashion of Mr. Osbaldiston as it is immortalized by Nimrod.

“ The best thing I ever saw, by Jupiter,” said my lord, taking off his hat, and pulling out his watch, “ thirty-five minutes with only two trifling checks. Who-hoop ! ”

“ Capital,” said the huntsman, “ and now the sooner we mizzle the better ;—here, avoy hounds, avoy hounds ! avoy, avoy ! ”

The pack followed him over the wall, and into the cab, which immediately drove off at a quick pace. Lord Lancashire and his friend jumped into the other cab, and drove off, I having declined their obliging offer to make room for me.

CHAPTER XVI.

AFTER this scene, I determined never again to seek the dangerous honour of Lord Lancashire's society. Even in my wildest days, his lordship's pace was a great deal faster than I thought safe or agreeable, and now, when I had so strong a motive to cultivate respectability, it was more than ever expedient for a person in my station of life to shun such companions. Brawling in taverns, worrying pettifoggers, and hunting gentlemen of the press, might be very pretty amusement for noblemen and gentlemen of independent fortune, but was quite unbecoming people who had their bread to get.

I at once told Sweeting my resolution, in the propriety of which he fully concurred, and intimated that he himself could hardly find character for such scenes.

“ Old Hooper,” said he, “ is a good-natured fellow, and does not think the worse of a chap for liking a spree now and then, though he himself has always been slow as a top. But I know if he was to hear of our constantly associating with lords and swells, he would think we were going to the devil—and then, you know, it would very soon be *walker* with us. So I vote we cut Lancashire and his lot forthwith. By the by, I must really speak seriously to Lofty about it too; he oughtn’t to be so much with Lancashire now; that sort of thing’s all very well for a young fellow, perhaps; but when a man comes to take a wife, it isn’t fair, damn it.”

“ Do you allude to Lord Reginald ? ” inquired I, with surprise which was not entirely feigned ;
“ I was not aware that he was married.”

“ Why, I’ll tell you,” returned Sweeting.
“ I don’t want to make a mystery with you, Wiggins, as, I dare say, you must have observed pretty much how things were going on. The fact is, I overheard some observations, which I didn’t much like, respecting my sister

and him, so I just quietly asked my nob what were his intentions? He answered, without hesitation, that they were perfectly honourable; upon which I said, then, my lord, in my opinion, the sooner they are carried into effect the better; for I have reason to believe the world are making rather free with my sister's character, in consequence of your attentions. He declared he would marry her to-morrow, if it wasn't for his father; but I, as the brother of the young lady, of course could have nothing to do with that, you know; my only business was to see that the purity of her maiden fame wasn't sullied by the breath of slander. However, as I knew the old Duke, his governor, was devilish high and proud, and wouldn't, probably, think Teresa quite a match for his son, I consented that the marriage should be private, and kept secret for the present. Therefore, of course, I don't wish it talked about, only I tell you, and a few of my intimate friends. Lofty's a devilish good sort of fellow; rather soft, but that's nothing against a married man, when he's fitted with a good wife, ha! ha!

Besides, between you and I and the post, my noble brother-in-law is likely enough to be his Grace the Duke of Gosport some day ; for Tilbury, the eldest brother, is as rotten as a pear. So, upon the whole, the girl hasn't done so much amiss, has she ?”

“ I should think,” said I, hardly able to suppress my bile, “ she has done considerably better than could have been expected.”

“ Why, yes,—why, yes,—perhaps she has,” said Sweeting, scratching his chin with the coolness of a man who was making a calculation. “ I took care to secure for her five hundred pounds a-year pin-money, and fifteen hundred pounds jointure, which, considering that she brought no tin, is as much, perhaps, as one could put in for. Some men, perhaps, would have been harder to deal with, but, for my part, I prefer drawing it mild, and leaving something to generosity ; but, as you say, it certainly is a good match, when one considers the prospects. By goles ! I should like to see Teresa a duchess ; she'd just about do it well, eh, Wiggins ?”

“Humph !” said I, “very possibly.”

“Why, my good fellow,” proceeded Sweeting, “the honour of the thing isn’t so much as you’d think for. Our family is not much now, I grant you, but we were very different a hundred years ago. My grandfather kept his coach and four, and never thought that any posterity of his would be in trade. You never happened to hear of the Sweetings, of Somersetshire, I suppose ?”

“No, indeed,” answered I, “though I was born and bred on the borders of that county.”

“Ah ! no, I suppose not,” said the foreman, somewhat disconcerted, as I thought, “the property was sold long before your time. Let me see,—I think the Davenports bought it.”

“I am not acquainted with such a name in Somersetshire ; though I believe it is known in the north of England.”

“Davenport — Davenport — then it must have been Pigot.”

“The Pigots,” replied I, “are a very old family in the county you have named, but I had always understood that they had been in

possession of their property for many generations."

"O dear, no! bless your heart! I admit they had property before, but they bought a great deal of ours. Pigots, oh, sir, I knew them well. I was at school with one of the sons,—a little, puny fellow,—I used to fight his battles for him and he used to do my syntax. I, being the second son, was intended for the church. We had a damned good living in the family, but it went with the rest: so here I am, measuring ribbon and tape; well, never mind. What I mean to say is, Wiggins, you know, that if my sister does seem to be a little elevated above her station in life, it is, after all, very little more than what you may say she was born to. The girl has got blood in her veins; that's what I mean."

CHAPTER XVII.

ON comparing notes, I found that this silly lord, (who would deserve a harsher epithet, if his offences against truth and honour were not merged in that extreme folly which is inconsistent with anything like moral principle,) had united his fate with that of Miss Teresa Sweeting, within a little week after the conversation with his father's friend, in which, it will be remembered, he not only disclaimed, in the most positive language, any such intention, but had even gone out of his way, to speak of the lady in terms of contumely, which gentlemen are not in the habit of using towards one of the weaker sex, however vicious or degraded.

The impatience of Lady Reginald Lofty to blaze forth upon the world in her new honours could not long be restrained, and her trembling

lord was constrained to communicate the event to the Duke. Some said, that the rapidly declining health of the Marquis of Tilbury prompted this precipitate disclosure ; but I believe it to have been the fact, that the unfortunate father received on the same day, the formal report of the medical gentlemen, as to the hopeless state of his heir-apparent, and the announcement of the marriage of his second son, and heir-presumptive ; a calamity, to which the death of that son, and, virtually, only remaining male representative, would have been considered preferable. It was said, that when the probably approaching dissolution of Lord Tilbury was broken to the Duke, he expressed his resignation to the will of Providence, but the other piece of intelligence struck him speechless, nor did he recover his senses for some hours. When restored to consciousness, he calmly examined the legal proofs of Lord Reginald's marriage, and, laying them aside without a word of comment, ordered that he should be denied to all visitors. From this seclusion he did not depart until after the death of his

eldest son, which took place shortly after. He then attended the funeral rites, which were celebrated at his ancestral seat, with great magnificence, and returning to London, immediately after their consummation, he summoned me to his presence. Of course, I immediately waited upon his Grace, whom I should hardly again have recognized, had I casually seen him, although a few weeks only had elapsed since my former interview with him, so much was his countenance wasted by care. The manner of my reception, likewise, was very different

sponsible authority, I did not give your statement the weight that it deserved. Sir I have wronged you ; *what you said was true.*" Here his Grace stopped short, struggling with his feelings. I began to feel affected.

" My Lord Duke—"

" Sir, I owe you amends for having doubted your veracity. I had no right to do so ; but I had yet to learn, that a member of the house of Lofty, *that a son of mine*, could be guilty of degradation, — of duplicity, — of dishonour. Sir, I beg you to understand, that I apologize to you ; that I appreciate the service you have rendered me. I beg you will, at any time, command any interest in my power to forward your views. In the mean time, you will be pleased to accept this acknowledgment of my obligation to you." So saying, he handed me a Bank note for a thousand pounds.

" My Lord Duke," said I, " may it please your Grace, I have done nothing to deserve this munificent—"

" Sir," said the Duke, interrupting me, " you are not to suppose that I should have considered

any pecuniary reward an adequate return for your service, had I been so fortunate as to have benefited by it. I only *request* you to receive this trifle as a temporary token of my—gratitude.”

“I beg leave to offer your Grace my most humble and sincere thanks,” answered I, burying the note in my fob; “but I trust that your Grace will not suppose that I was actuated by any mercenary motive, in approaching your Grace upon such an errand.”

“Your motive, Mr. Wiggins,” replied his Grace “I have nothing to do with. I am willing to believe that it was perfectly disinterested; my only concern is to set myself right with you.”

“Please you, my Lord Duke,” said I, willing to retire with a good grace, “may I venture, with the utmost respect, to offer my heartfelt regrets that the information, with which I took the liberty to approach your Grace, was not productive of the good effects which I wished to result from it.”

I was proceeding with another elegant sen-

tence, when his Grace stopped my eloquence by a bow, significant of his pleasure that I should take my leave, which I did, with a profound respect and deference, that had not marked the termination of my former interview with the same exalted personage.

It was with feelings of unfeigned sorrow and sympathy, that, within a month after this circumstance, I read in the public prints, that the noble Duke had been gathered to his fathers. The shock which his son's conduct had given to his feelings of worldly pride and personal honour, had been fatal to a constitution already shattered by sickness and disappointed ambition.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was a betting day at Tattersall's and the yard was crowded when the report of the Duke of Gosport's death was put in circulation.

"Have you heard the news?" cries one. "They say the Duke of Gosport died this morning."

"What then?" says Colonel Camelford, a thorough-going Newmarket-man: "*he has no nominations.*"

"By Jove! you don't mean that," eagerly exclaimed Sir Henry Rivington, who was standing by.

"A positive fact, I can assure you, Sir Henry," said another, "I had it from the best authority."

"Hurrah!" exclaimed the Baronet, and hastily pushed through the crowd.

"Now what the devil's the meaning of

that?" inquired the Colonel, looking after Sir Henry with great surprise; "one would suppose he expected a legacy from this old Duke."

"Bless you, Colonel," said the man who had corroborated the information of the other, "don't you know Jemmy Sweeting's sister, that Coventry Stapleton used to keep, is now Duchess, in consequence."

The Colonel was still unenlightened.

"I believe it isn't generally known," said his informant, lowering his voice, "but them long odds that was laid just before Spring meeting about this event coming off, was booked for Sir Henry. A thousand to ten, if you recollect, was took about Sweeting being Duchess of Gosport, Lord Reginald's eldest brother being then alive, though my lord he was very spoony upon Sweeting, and 'twas thought would marry her. However, they say it was all a draw from the first, for Sir Henry, who you know is in-and-in with Jem, saw the marriage articles signed before the odds was took."

"Damn the odds," said Colonel Camelford, impatiently, "what has a Dolly being a

Duchess to do with business. What will you lay me about Bland's horse?"

Mr. Coventry Stapleton, Sir Henry Rivington, Mr. S. Wiggins, and the fair Teresa herself, were, I believe, the principal gainers by this event. The former, (if report is to be credited,) got rid of a connection of which he was tired, and touched a good sum by his mistress's advancement, which he backed to as great an amount as he could get on. The Baronet and myself each sacked a cool thousand. Mr. Sweeting, however, found himself in a very different condition to what he had expected by this event coming off. "He was handed over," as the sporting-men phrased it, "by his own jockey." In plain words, Teresa, in a very short time after her marriage, summarily broke off all intercourse with her own family, and cut all her former acquaintance. She withdrew Lord Reginald altogether from the sporting world, and especially interdicted all communications with her brother, who was thus left completely "planted." The new Duchess, finding that the society from which

she had recently emerged might bar her immediate admission to the pure, unpolluted atmosphere of fashionable life in this country, determined on performing quarantine abroad.

Mr. Sweeting was exceedingly chagrined at the failure of this his favourite speculation, although he talked largely in public of his sister the Duchess, and of his brother-in-law the Duke, and of his nephew "Tilbury,"— for in due time there appeared a little stranger with a legal claim to that title. However, the world saw no practical result from all this, and that, notwithstanding his high connections, he still continued the same Jemmy Sweeting that he was before, still flourishing a yard measure, and haunting second-rate hells and billiard-rooms. I exceedingly regretted the disappointment of his hopes, for he now prosecuted with double assiduity his designs upon Miss Hooper,—a pursuit which he would probably have abandoned, had other things turned out differently.

This circumstance was of itself sufficient to give me a good deal of concern, which was soon

increased to a degree of alarm by a change, too evident to be mistaken, which took place in the conduct and manner, both of Mr. Hooper and his daughter towards me. They suddenly treated me with coldness, and no longer invited me to their house. Such a change I immediately saw, however, could not be the consequence merely of a decision in favour of my rival ; I could draw but one inference from it, namely, that they had heard something prejudicial to my character. Under this impression, I was at a loss what to do. Conscience forbade my challenging Mr. Hooper on the subject, for alas ! I could not brave investigation. On the other hand, feeling reluctant to sit down patiently under the loss of his good opinion, and of those flattering prospects which I had lately indulged, I was disposed to throw myself upon the indulgence of my kind and liberal friend, and frankly confess to him all the errors into which I had been led on the strength of my sincere resolutions of future amendment. While I was deliberating on this course, my employer sent for me

one morning, and I attended his summons with a sad foreboding of what he had to communicate.

“ Mr. Wiggins,” said he with a countenance of serious and anxious import, “ I wish to speak to you on a matter which concerns you nearly. Be seated. I should, perhaps, take blame to myself for having concealed from you for a moment what has come to my ears ; but before I acted upon the information I received, I thought it better to see your friend Mr. Tibbetts, and hear what he had to say about it. That gentleman, I regret to tell you, has not been able to satisfy my mind. He has indeed convinced me of there being considerable exaggeration in what I have heard, while he admitted that he had only your version of the story. The good opinion expressed of you by a person so eminently respectable as Mr. Tibbetts, must undoubtedly have weight ; but unless you can explain in a satisfactory manner certain particulars of which I have been advised, it will be my duty to terminate our connection. I believe, Sir, you were lately present at a dinner-party given to or by the Marquess of

Lancashire, and other noblemen and gentlemen?"

"I was, Sir; I attended that party in company with, and on the introduction of, Mr. Sweeting."

"So I have been informed, Sir, by Mr. Sweeting himself: and I may here observe, that I took occasion to give Mr. Sweeting my opinion of the impropriety of persons in his and your line of life, frequenting society so much out of your sphere; he has promised for the future to abstain from such company, and very handsomely took upon himself the whole of your share of the blame, which I thought attached to both of you on that account. Mr. Sweeting is a young man of excellent abilities and intentions, but of a gay and thoughtless temper which sometimes leads him and others into error. If he could be cured of those defects, he would be in every respect a most superior young man. He has been unfortunate in his education, and in having worthless female relations, and therefore I consider his failings entitled to the more indulgence. No man can

feel more acutely than he does the disgraceful characters of those women, or regard in a more proper light a recent event, which many persons in his situation would consider an honour, — I allude to the marriage of his sister with one of our first nobility. So far from exulting in that event, he assured me himself, that he deeply regretted it; and that were it possible to dissolve the connection, he would gladly assist in doing so.”

I listened without surprise to this panegyric, though I could not help secretly admiring this new instance of the cool effrontery and daring dissimulation of my *friend*. Mr. Hooper proceeded.

“At the dinner-party to which I have alluded, you were recognized by an individual present, with whom, however, it appears you were not personally acquainted. That party traced you to your connection with this establishment, and consequently wrote me that he had something of importance to communicate in a private interview. I saw him, and he then stated in plain terms that you were a swindler, well-known in Bath by the name of

Fitz-Wiggins ; that you had come there styling yourself a gentleman of private fortune, connected with the aristocracy, and as such was received into the fashionable society of the place ; that you had entered into a treaty of marriage with a young lady of family and fortune, which was just about being carried into effect when your real quality was discovered ; and finally, that you absconded from Bath, deeply in debt with all the tradesmen, and especially with a Mr. Smallcombe, whom you had completely duped, defrauding him not only of goods, but of money which he had been induced to advance you on the representation of your approaching marriage. My informant added, that Mr. Smallcombe would corroborate his statement, and in all probability prosecute you, if he knew where you were to be found. Accordingly, I wrote to that gentleman, and here is his reply :—

‘ Bath, June 12, 18—

‘ SIR,

‘ I have the honour to acknowledge your favour of the 10th ult. Am sorry to say your

advice is correct as to Fitz-Wiggins, alias Wiggins. Have been defrauded by same to a considerable amount, both in goods and cash, but decline prosecuting, as do not like sending good money after bad. With thanks,

‘ Respectfully,

‘ JNO. SMALLCOMBE.’

‘ Mr. D. Hooper, Messrs. Hutchins and Hooper,
New Bond Street.’

“ I should tell you, Sir, that I wrote Mr. Smallcombe, in case my information was founded in truth, I would afford him every assistance in bringing you to justice, if such should be his desire.

“ Well, Sir, the letter I have just read to you, I communicated to Mr. Tibbetts, who certainly gave this Mr. Smallcombe a very indifferent character, and was of opinion that no weight was to be attached to his accusation. He told me that Mr. Smallcombe, who, it seems, is a relative of yours, had been the instigator of the Bath adventure, which you had undertaken for a frolic, but that he had proposed to turn it to profitable account, but as I found

he had only your authority for this version of the affair, I did not think myself justified in entering into it. Besides, Mr. Tibbetts is one of those guileless, and I might even say, perhaps, though by no means in a sense of disparagement, simple persons, who are more guided by the dictates of their own kind hearts, than by any evidence short of positive demonstration against a friend or fellow-creature. I, however, who am not so indulgent as Mr. Tibbetts, and have lived many more years in the world, am probably less apt to be imposed upon—less likely to be deceived in character, which, indeed, it does not often happen to me to be. I confess, though, Mr. Wiggins, I was disposed to think well of you; and rejoiced should I be could you prove to me that your proceedings at Bath did not go beyond the bounds of a joke, though of a very silly and impertinent nature.”

The good man here finished his somewhat sententious address, and with an anxiety and interest which he did not affect to conceal, awaited my answer. I assured him that he

should hear from me the whole unvarnished truth, and I kept my word. I gave him the history of my first connection with Smallcombe, and a sketch of my subsequent adventures, up to the time of my coming to Bath, where I frankly admitted that, at the suggestion and instance of Smallcombe, I had been induced, partly for fun, but chiefly with a view to a matrimonial pecuniary result, to assume a fictitious character. I strenuously maintained, however, that this was the sole fraud of which I had been guilty, and pleaded in mitigation of punishment, my sincere repentance, and the disappointments and discouragements which I had already suffered on account of my offence. Reduced to despair at the thoughts of being ignominiously banished from the scene of my dearest hopes, I deprecated Mr. Hooper's severity with an earnestness and emotion which at length found relief in tears. The good man himself was much affected, and I saw that he began to relent from his purpose.

"If you are sincerely repentant," said he, after a silence of some minutes, "Heaven forbid

that I should take it upon myself to punish you. We all, more or less, stand in need of indulgence. Well, well, Mr. Wiggins, say no more about it—say no more.” And he rose from his chair, and pressed my hand. “Come, come, cheer up; you have been in error, but there is no reason why you should not yet retrieve your character. Your abilities and information are greatly above your station. Suffer yourself not to be misled by them, but do you guide them in the path of honour and virtue. I shall not dismiss you from your situation in this establishment, and will myself be sponsor for your future good conduct. I must tell you that this story has got wind, how, I know not; but never mind, my countenance shall protect you from insult; and it depends entirely upon yourself, whether you shall ultimately be received at my house on the same terms as before. Now go to your counter.”

I bowed in speechless gratitude, and left the room.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE kindness of Mr. Hooper made a deep impression upon me, and if anything more had been wanted to confirm the good resolutions which my pure and rational attachment to the daughter had inspired, it would have been this generous conduct on the part of her father. I might now confidently hope that, after a short probation, I should be restored to the society of Miss Hooper. But there were still two points which gave me serious doubts and anxiety. The one, was whether that young lady had been made acquainted with the disreputable passages in my history just disclosed? and, if so, whether they would not materially change the good opinion and preference, which I had lately every reason to believe that I enjoyed? My second care had reference to the advantages

which my rival, Sweeting, would possess in consequence of my exclusion. Even assuming that Miss Hooper had been disposed to regard that person with a degree of distrust or repugnance, would not the high esteem and favour in which he was held by her father, and his own captivating qualities, rendered more potent by being now entirely devoted to her, very soon give affairs a turn, very much to my disadvantage.

Though a firm believer in the constancy of womankind, I did not feel that I had acquired such an interest in this young lady's heart, as to be proof against such an adverse weight of circumstances. My situation, indeed, as regarded this matter, was truly painful and embarrassing. I knew Sweeting to be a profligate man, and, from the conversation I had recently had with Mr. Hooper, it appeared that he had completely and designedly imposed on that gentleman. I saw no ground of hope that the possession of such a moral and mental treasure as Mary Hooper, would ever be appreciated by him, or reclaim him from his

vicious habits. Was I then, knowing this, to stand by and allow my master and patron to misbestow his confidence, to be cheated of his property, and, what he valued still more, his child? Was it not my duty to interfere, and prevent an amiable girl from being made miserable for life? But, on the other hand, would not such interference on my part be perfidious and ungenerous towards Sweeting? would it not be,—to use a term which genius has made more expressive of such conduct than any word in Johnson,—would it not be a *Blifil-like* proceeding? would it not, in all likelihood, be so considered by Mr. Hooper, and, therefore, end in nothing but my own disgrace? This objection preponderated, and I determined to wait, in the hope that some turn of fortune would render the odious and dangerous office of informer unnecessary. Mean time, I need hardly say, I kept a strict watch on their proceedings, Sweeting, all the time, forcing upon me his confidence in this delicate affair, explaining his views and intentions, and reporting, from time to time, the progress and prosperity of his suit.

I was thus worked up to a state of bile and anxiety almost intolerable, when circumstances arose of such grave importance, as almost to suspend, in all parties concerned, the interest of this matter.

A rumour had for some weeks past been whispered, that the house was in embarrassment. Mr. Hooper had been in frequent communication with members of the great wholesale houses with whom we did business. When not engaged in these personal conferences, he was occupied in writing letters, his correspondence having, also, of late greatly increased. At the same time, marks of care and hurry were observable in the usually placid countenance of the acting partner, and his serenity of manner had given place to peevishness and impetuosity, quite at variance with his character. He suddenly gave up his comfortable house, and retired into humble lodgings; his one-horse chaise and man-servant were, at the same time, put down. But one construction could be put upon these symptoms. Nevertheless, there were many who confidently hoped

that the integrity and skill of Mr. Hooper might yet avert the impending blow, and sustain the credit of a concern, which had been considered one of the most flourishing and responsible at the West-end. Commercial distress and political agitation, coming, as they generally do, hand-in-hand, had greatly injured our business this season and the last; but, as these temporary influences had begun to subside, it was predicted that the house would right itself.

But the causes assigned, however adequate, had been greatly aggravated by the rash and thoughtless conduct of the senior partner, Mr. Hatchins. That gentleman and his family were now wholly actuated by the silly and vulgar ambition, too often witnessed in this country, of emigrating from the middle state to an upper sphere of society. Therefore, the shop must be sunk, old connections broken off, substantial friendship sacrificed, respectability abandoned, for the pleasure and advantage of being ridiculed, despised, and, perhaps, plundered, by a dozen or two disreputable, or worth-

less members of the aristocracy, and hangers-on of fashionable circles. For this object, a great demonstration of wealth must be made; a fine house and furniture must be procured; and their table baited with the choicest cookery and wines.

These spirited efforts were so far successful, that Mr. and Mrs. Hutchins had soon the pleasure of seeing an Irish peer in attendance on their daughter; and Mr. Frederick could boast the intimate friendship of the Honourable Coventry Stapleton, Sir Mark Chouse, and two or three more gentlemen with handles to their names. In this excellent company, the young man found no difficulty in getting through the eight hundred pounds per annum, which his father allowed him, and as much more. The payment of these debts, coming upon the extraordinary demands of his own establishment, put the old gentleman to his trumps; but his commercial education had taught him that every thing has its market price, and that the society of the great is only to be purchased at a high rate. Besides, his wife and daughter assured

him, that it required only another great effort to secure the Irish peer.

Mr. Hooper regarded these proceedings of his partner with sorrow and alarm, notwithstanding that the latter frequently assured him, that he was not exceeding his means. Hooper, indeed, contemplated taking the course which prudence dictated, of winding-up the affairs of the house, and retiring; but his partner so strongly remonstrated against this step, pointing out the injury that it would do him, by giving a sanction to the rumours which were afloat, relative to his extravagant mode of living, that Hooper, who could not reconcile it to himself to abandon the son of his old friend and patron, that partly for this reason, and partly on the faith of Mr. Hutchins's assurance that he should never suffer from the connection, he was induced to relinquish his intention.

The consequences were such as might have been expected. Mr. Hutchins's expedients for raising money had involved the house in considerable embarrassment, which would soon have terminated in insolvency, had not the vigilance

and probity of Mr. Hooper, as soon as he was satisfied that their affairs were irretrievable, saved the creditors from farther injury, by immediately committing an act of bankruptcy. When he found that his partner could not be dissuaded from this line, Mr. Hutchins hastily realized whatever property he could lay his hands on, and embarked, with his wife and daughter, for America. Mr. Frederick Hutchins declined to accompany his family on this trip, preferring to take up his quarters at the Farringdon Hotel, an old established place of resort of the sporting and fashionable circles.

Mr. Hooper's earnest desire was, that the debts of the house should be discharged in full. It was found that about five thousand pounds were wanting to complete its engagements ; upon hearing which, Miss Hooper immediately transferred that sum to the credit of the assignees ; thus reducing a fortune of eight thousand pounds, which had been settled upon her at the time her father entered

into partnership with Mr. Hutchins. This step was the first she had ever taken without the advice and sanction of her parent. What the feelings of that parent were, on learning this act of noble and romantic integrity, and whether those of regret or admiration were preponderant, I cannot determine, but the feeling of the creditors was to refuse profiting by such unheard of generosity. One old gentleman, however, the principal creditor, was decidedly against the project of refunding this money. He admitted that Miss Hooper's conduct deserved all praise, and he regretted that she should be impoverished by her father's misfortune; but business was business, and, as the fund had come into the estate, he maintained that it ought to be made available. This view of the question was adopted by others, and the result was, that they gave Miss Hooper a vote of thanks and kept her money. Never, indeed, did bankrupt get his certificate under more honourable circumstances; a liberal allowance was

unanimously offered him by the creditors, but he would accept no more than one hundred pounds a-year, and even this, he would have declined, had not his age and infirmities incapacitated him from earning a livelihood.

CHAPTER XX.

Among those who most deeply lamented this catastrophe, was Mr. Sweeting. He was just consoling himself under the failure of his more brilliant speculations with the sober certainty of Miss Hooper's hand, with eight thousand pounds *down*, and expectations, when this event took place. His indignation and disgust when he heard what Mary had done were excessive, for he declared that, notwithstanding what had happened, he would still have thought it worth his while to marry her; but now that she had thought proper, with a degree of folly which he had hardly thought was in human nature, to reduce herself to comparative beggary, the thing was out of the question. He had not patience even to take a formal leave of the Hoopers, but abruptly cut their acquaint-

ance. It afforded me great gratification to find that this conduct occasioned little surprise or regret in Miss Hooper.

I now learned from her own lips that she had always entertained doubts as to his character, and regarded with uneasiness her father's partiality for him. The old gentleman had never been influenced by his daughter's distaste for Sweeting, but had combated her prejudices, as he termed them, and gone so far as to throw out hints that he wished her to think well of him. Nor could his contemptuous and ungrateful neglect of them in their adversity work an immediate change in Mr. Hooper's sentiments. He still thought that Sweeting's behaviour might be capable of a favourable construction, and protested against a hasty judgment: false delicacy, or circumstances unexplained, might be the cause of his absence. I now thought the time was come when I might, without impropriety, enlighten the mind of my friend and patron upon this subject. I told him, therefore, all that I

knew respecting that person's habits of life, leaving him to draw his own conclusions. He noted attentively what I urged, and remarked, somewhat coolly, that as he was not apt to form hasty opinions, he required very decided proof before he altered them. He was aware of Mr. Sweeting's failings, but was unwilling to believe him so depraved as I had represented him to be ; and gently hinted that I was not entitled to expect him to give up a person whom he had favoured on my unsupported testimony. I was, of course, rather hurt at the rebuke ; but I could not help feeling, at the same time, that it was no more than I deserved, and was consoled by the reflection that in this instance I was actuated by no selfish nor ungenerous motive. I contented myself with saying as much, and expressing a hope that he would at least receive my information as a caution against reposing unlimited confidence in Sweeting, should circumstances renew their connection. Mr. Hooper promised this, and in releasing me from farther

attendance upon him, spoke of me and himself with a degree of kindness and magnanimity which sensibly affected me.

“I wish you well, Mr. Wiggins,” said he; “and as we may not meet again in this world, I should wish, at parting, to offer you a few words of advice, for which I trust the relationship in which we have recently stood towards each other, and the difference of our years, will be considered a sufficient apology. I hope, and believe, you heartily regret the errors of your former life; but, my friend, I would fain see these good dispositions confirmed; I want you to be satisfied that there is no permanent happiness or prosperity without religion and virtue. I have witnessed many instances of worldly prosperity created by dishonest arts, but I never saw it combined with contentment and happiness. To take so low a consideration into the balance, believe me, it is as easy to make a fortune by honest as dishonest means; there is less anxiety in the process, and there is solid satisfaction in the result. In the scheme of inscrutable Provi-

dence, it does sometimes happen that the wicked are exalted and the righteous are depressed, but is this any argument against following the high path of honour? It would be a very bad and silly argument if we had nothing to look to beyond this world; but when it involves the interests of immortality to which these poor temporal concerns are but as dust in the scale, what must we think, on a moment's reflection, of the understanding of a man whose actions are governed by such views? What would be our opinion of a man who in any particular affair of life was to act upon analogous reasoning? Why, that he was of unsound mind, and unfit for the management of his affairs. Thus, on a comparatively sordid and selfish view of the matter, we may be satisfied that honesty is the best policy. But a true Christian will, I hope, take his position on higher grounds. You will not, I think, accuse me of vanity in bringing forward myself as an illustration of the truths which I would fain impress upon you. I was not endowed with your talents, Mr. Wiggins, and my condition in

Life originally was much inferior to yours. Perhaps it was owing to these circumstances, that I subsequently acquired a certain station in the world. I felt that my deficiencies rendered a persevering industry and good conduct absolutely indispensable. For nearly five years I swept the shop in which I was afterwards a partner; for ten years more, I did not rise above a very subordinate situation; at last, by going on in the same steady course, I attracted the notice, and acquired the confidence, of my master, whom I served faithfully for thirty years. During that lengthened period, I saw many of my contemporaries, who had for the most part started with better prospects than myself, some ruined by delusive pursuits, some borne down by disappointments, and others remaining stationary. You will say, perhaps, that a similar fate awaited me. True, but the habits which I had cultivated, enabled me to bear the reverse with equanimity. I will not deny that it gave me a pang to see the fruits of nearly half a century of honest industry destroyed by the folly of others. I will own that I had che-

rished the worldly pride of realizing a competency, which should be enjoyed by my beloved child ; but it has pleased Providence to order otherwise, and I cheerfully bow to his decree. I do not regard it as a punishment, but as a trial of that strength in which, perhaps, I may have been over confident. My years render any second acquisition of fortune impossible, which my short-sighted affection leads me to regret for the sake of her whom I shall leave behind ; but I feel, nevertheless, that it is for the best, though I cannot see. Perhaps her wealth might have only purchased her misery. She will be provided for.—‘I have been young, and now I am old, but never yet saw I the righteous forsaken, or their seed begging their bread.’

“ Let me entreat you, therefore, my friend, in the name of religion, in the name of common sense, to persevere resolutely in the straight path of duty, nor suffer yourself to be led astray from it by any temptation however captivating. Do not let indolence or irresolution persuade you that it is too late to retrace your steps.

retire from
to hear of
if my ex-
advance
Farewell.

I thank
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Hooper, a

CHAPTER XXI.

SOME readers will perhaps be disposed to blame me for not having sought a parting interview with Miss Hooper, and may be disposed to attribute my omission in this respect, either to a faint-heartedness proverbially fatal to success with the fair sex, or to the young lady's having lost all her charms in my eyes, as well as in those of Mr. Sweeting, by her silly and romantic conduct in the affair of her father's bankruptcy. Time was, when I might have viewed the matter in the same light as Mr. S.; but now, though I do not mean to say I could emulate such a proceeding, I thought it might admit of a construction favourable to her understanding as well as generosity. The truth is, it had been my intention to take the opportunity of a parting interview to avow my

sentiments to Miss Hooper; but I abandoned it, when I found that my addresses could not at present be acceptable to her father, for whose kindness I thought it would be a bad return to attempt to secure his child's affections without his consent. This resolution was the first fruit of his good counsels, the first sacrifice which I had made to honour and principle, and this was the first time my heart had beat high with the approbation of conscience.

A few days after I had bade farewell to Mr. Hooper, that gentleman and his amiable daughter left London to take up their abode at a small town in Oxfordshire, the birth-place of Mr. Hooper, where some of his relatives still resided.

For my own part, I did not think it necessary to despair of still realizing my proudest hopes. Though I had never been assured by a positive acknowledgment of her preference for me, I thought I might at least console myself that my dearest Mary had no other partiality. The want of means could hardly be any serious obstacle to our union, for be-

tween us, we should have enough to purchase all the comforts, and even some of the luxuries, of an humble station, with which I knew she would be contented. What I feared was, that, during our separation, some man in every respect worthier and more eligible than myself, might appreciate her worth and obtain the prize. My friend Lady Tott, to whom I mentioned this apprehension, did not think there was much in it; she had no doubt the girl would wait for me if I wished it, but censured my folly in thinking any more of a match, the only sensible foundation for which, namely, money, now existed no longer. On this point, however, I tried to stop her ladyship's mouth, by reminding her of her own choice, who had nothing to recommend him beyond his personal merits. But she denied that there was any resemblance between the cases; protesting that her marriage with Tibbetts was a matter of business; and that her dear Sir John, if he could look out of his grave, would highly approve of it; and dared Tibbetts to say that she had shown him any token of personal tenderness

which could lead him or any person to suppose that female weakness had anything to do with it. The poor man thus challenged, did not indeed venture any soft impeachment, but admitted with an amorous leer, that her ladyship's matrimonial choice had indicated the same wisdom and discrimination which influenced all her actions. With this acknowledgment, Lady Tott was satisfied, and suffered the subject to drop.

A few days after, Tibbetts informed me, under a solemn promise of secrecy, that Lady Tott, finding me bent upon marrying Miss Hooper, had taken upon herself to write to her father, and sound him upon the subject. The reply of the old gentleman was as satisfactory as could be expected under the circumstances. He did not directly sanction my addresses, but gave them no positive discouragement; a course which I thought, with my friend, argued a favourable disposition.

This intimation made me very happy. I attributed the favour which Mr. Hooper thus indirectly gave to my hopes, in some measure,

to the intelligence which I had given him with regard to Sweeting having lately received very decided confirmation. The catastrophe of that ingenious person's plots and schemes was more serious than even I myself had portended. After he had quitted the shop in Bond Street, I had no tidings of him, until, about a month afterwards, the newspaper gave an account of his examination at Bow Street, on a charge of swindling. It appeared, judging from dates, that soon after the overthrow of his ambitious hopes from the marriage of Teresa, he had connected himself with a set of desperate adventurers, who advertised as money lenders, with the view of getting fraudulent possession of bills and other securities. They had contrived to baffle the law by employing a great many agents in these pretended transactions. They had commenced this trade with some degree of success, when the Irish peer, who was in attendance upon Miss Hutchins, attracted by their liberal offers of "pecuniary accommodation upon the personal security of noblemen," &c., addressed a note to "T. B.,"

at some coffee-house, who referred him to a Mr. Jones in the City, who, having heard his wants, gave him a card to Mr. Hastings Walsingham, at the West-end, who listened with great attention to an exact repetition of his "temporary embarrassments," and adjourned him, for a few days, to make inquiries. On the day appointed, his lordship waited on Mr. Hastings Walsingham, who sent him to his solicitors, Messrs. Howard and Wagstaff, whose office was in Margaret Street Cavendish Square. These gentlemen, after exacting from the poor

three, six, and nine months' date, respectively. These valuable documents Mr. Hastings Walsingham carefully deposited in his pocket-book, and promising to see his friend the capitalist in the course of the afternoon, and call the following day with the consideration, viz., seven hundred and forty pounds, made his bow, leaving the nobleman quite delighted at the idea of having, for once in his life, *done the Jews*. But he was not left long in this pleasing delusion. The next day came, but no Mr. Hastings Walsingham. A week elapsed without any account of him. The peer was then advised to caution the mercantile world, by public advertisement, against negotiating the said bills; a proceeding which it seemed excited a great deal of merriment among those who happened to know the value of his lordship's paper. When the sudden smash of his friend Hutchins destroyed all his fondly-cherished hopes, and every probability of his being in a situation to meet these bills, the peer would willingly have let the matter drop, satisfied with what he had already lost—to wit, the price of the

stamps and the advertisements, which he had disbursed in hard cash ; but the police had already got the job in hand, and his lordship received a visit one morning from a Bow Street officer, who brought him the agreeable intelligence that he had caught Mr. Hastings Walsingham at Liverpool, and had brought him up to town in a chaise and four. The peer internally cursed the vigilance of the thief-taker, which left him no alternative but to prosecute, or submit to a great deal of ill-natured comment. He was forced to take the line of public duty, by other parties coming forward with charges against the prisoner, who, upon the evidence, was committed to Newgate. At the Old Bailey he made a good defence, but was convicted, and sentenced to transportation for fourteen years. My curiosity led me to visit him in prison ; he seemed glad to see me, and talked very freely of his affairs, the unfortunate issue of which he ascribed to the perfidy of his sister, whose match he had been the principal means of bringing about, under the most solemn promises from her that he should

share her influence and interest with Lord Reginald. By way of revenging himself for her breach of faith, he had himself described in the calendar as "only brother of her Grace the Duchess of Gosport;" and in his defence at the trial, favoured the court and the public with the secret history of her Grace's marriage; an *éclaircissement* which completely extinguished all her Grace's hopes of shining forth as a leader of fashion in this country.

Mr. Sweeting, in reply to my inquiry on that head, admitted that he had never received any unequivocal and decided encouragement from Miss Hooper; but informed me that the old gentleman openly favoured his addresses. He then charged me with a commission to find out Mr. Coventry Stapleton, who was to be heard of at a certain haunt, and to convey to that gentleman, from him, an intimation that he need no longer make himself scarce, as there was no chance of his being "wanted." In explanation of this message, which I promised faithfully to deliver, Sweeting gave me to understand, that after his capture, fearing that

something might come out at his expected trial to implicate his friend, he had warned him to keep out of the way, but as the apprehended disclosures had not been made, he wished to recal the edict of banishment. Sweeting, whose sanguine temper never forsook him, had already formed schemes of making a fortune at New South Wales. Nevertheless, upon the whole, he gave it as his opinion that he had followed a bad trade ; and declared that, if he were to recommence life, he would bind himself apprentice to a tailor, rather than be dependant on the fickleness of fortune.

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CHAPTER XXII.

MY indefatigable friends in Doughty Street were again busily employed in finding me another situation, but, as my circumstances were now made tolerably easy, in consequence of the munificent gift of the late Duke of Gosport, it was decided that I should not be in a hurry to suit myself, but wait until something more than ordinarily eligible should offer. Had I consulted my inclinations, I should have taken a pleasure trip to France before I again settled myself ; such dissipation, however, would not have been calculated to raise me in the opinion of Mr. Hooper, so I resolved to stick to business.

I was returning one afternoon from the City, to my lodgings at the West-end, thinking of Mary Hooper, and building aërial castles, when

I was stopped by a short squab female, neither very young, handsome, nor clean, who, looking earnestly in my face, begged my pardon, and asked if my name was not Wiggins? With great surprise, I answered in the affirmative; when the stout lady, with something like a reproachful look and sigh, said,

“Then you don’t recollect me, don’t you?”

“Really, ma’am, you have the advantage. Bless my heart! is it possible? can it be Julia — Miss Peck?”

“What!” cried she, (for it was indeed her,) with some displeasure, “am I so altered then, that you did not know me?”

“Not a bit,” answered I, with an unblushing countenance. “I should have known you anywhere; you are as lovely as ever, only a *leetle* stouter.”

“They tell me I’m grown rather stout,” said Julia, with composure, “independent of my situation.”

“Situation?” echoed I, inquiringly.

“Yes,” said my first love, bending her eyes on the pavement, and playing with a yellow

reticule, which hung from her arm, "I'm married."

I attempted to look despair.

"It's now nine year since," she proceeded, "and I've seven children living."

"Give me leave to offer you my most sincere congratulations, my dear Mrs. — I beg your pardon?"

"Groves," murmured Julia, softly. "And do you, Mr. Wiggins, really rejoice at such an event?"

"I rejoice at anything which promotes your happiness," answered I, with equivocal gallantry. "But tell me, what is your husband?"

"We're in the public line," replied Mrs. Groves. "Oh, Mr. Wiggins! we never know what we shall come to. — But when can you come and see me; I've oceans to tell you. How glad I am! Oh, dear!"

We found, on comparing notes, that my lodgings were within ten minutes walk of Mr. Groves's gin-palace, and, after some discussion, it was agreed that I should accompany my old flame thither forthwith, be introduced to her

husband, and spend the day with them. We walked away, therefore, arm-in-arm, Mrs. Groves, in her confusion of spirits, sometimes uttering an exclamation of surprise and pleasure at our unexpected meeting, sometimes giving me a scrap of information respecting her adventures, or asking a question about mine since we had seen each other; sometimes, again, indulging in a reminiscence of old times, and very frequently stopping to catch her wind, exhausted by the combined efforts of walking and talking. In about half an hour, she welcomed me into her house, conducting me to a small dark parlour behind the bar, the walls of which were adorned with prints of racing and cock-fighting; while on a table in the corner, were neatly arranged a large Bible, Blair's Sermons, the Pilgrim's Progress, the Encyclopedia of Wit, two old volumes of the Racing Calendar, and a backgammon-board. In this elegant apartment, which was powerfully redolent of tobacco smoke and brandy and water, sat a huge fellow, with a pipe in his mouth, and a tumbler of hot mixture at his elbow.

“Lovey,” said Mrs. Groves, to this amiable person, in comparison with whom she might have passed for a sylph, “I’ve brought an old friend of mine to introduce to you. Mr. Wiggins, Mr. Groves. I picked him up in the street, quite by accident. Oh, dear! how tired I am.” So saying, she spread herself out in an arm-chair to cool, for the day was excessively warm.

Mr. Groves, without rising, cast a careless glance at me, nodded to a chair, and chuckled slightly.

“Sit down, Mr. Scroggins; my wife’s friends is always welcome, and I’ve seen a pretty many of ’em. Ho! what will you have?”

“Thank you,” said I, “a little weak brandy and water, if you please.”

“Bill,” cried Mr. Groves to the bar. “Why, missis, you seem rather blowed. A drop of summut short for you, I suppose?”

“La, Groves, how can you? A glass of water, I think,” said she, faintly.

“Oh, yes! you looks like water; ha! ha!

ha ! ha ! Bill, a go of gin to your missis, and cold without for the gent, — directly."

"Well, lovey, you know best," said the obedient wife ; "and, certainly, I am very warm — pugh !" And she fanned herself violently with her pocket-handkerchief until the arrival of the gin, which glided down her throat with an ease and fluency, as if it was not unaccustomed to the passage ; her husband winking at me, as much as to imply that such was the case.

"Have you got the money from number five, for them seventeen pots of half-and-half ?" inquired Mrs. Groves of the retreating attendant.

"No, ma'am," answered Bill ; "they promise to pay on Monday ; and master said, we was to try 'em once more."

"Didn't I tell you," cried Julia, "if they didn't pay to-day, you wasn't to leave another drop of liquor at the door."

"Yes, ma'am, only master —"

"Master ! don't master me, you stupid fool ! I'll teach you to disobey my positive orders !

if you don't get the money, I'll stop it out of your next month. What do you stand there for? Don't you see the people at the bar waiting to be served?"

The fellow withdrew sulkily, muttering something between his teeth.

"There now, Mr. Groves," continued his spouse, "there's a matter of five and eightpence as good as gone; that comes of your credit system: the last time I laid-in, pounds was lost in the same way. If it wasn't for me, the business would go to rack and ruin, and I, a poor delicate creature, always a-breeding."

"Come, don't be angry, old girl," said Mr. Groves: "I dare say it will be all right."

"You dare say! yes, that's how you go on; that's the way with all you men; as long as you get your ease, the poor wife may toil and fret. What do you care, though there is the value of seventeen or twenty pots of half-and-half lost to your family? Oh! no matter."

To these reproaches Mr. Groves made no reply, but very philosophically returned to his pipe.

“ Mr. Groves,” said Julia, with a spirit which somewhat reminded me of her former self, “ I will not be treated with contempt.”

“ Damn you !” answered her lord, whose patience began to give way ; “ what a contrary jade you are. You put me in mind of my old mare. If you pulled at her,” added he, addressing himself to me, “ she milled ; if you let her have her head, she turned stomachy, — vicious all over.”

“ Really, sir,” exclaimed the lady, flushing with rage at this unsavoury simile, “ your conduct is unbearable ; but I deserve it for having demeaned myself by marrying such a fellow. What must this gentleman think of such language and behaviour, who, like myself, has always been accustomed to the most genteel society, and the manners of high life.”

“ Hold your jaw, or by George I’ll put the stick over you !”

“ Will you,—will you !” cried Julia, almost speechless with passion.

“ I always know what you want, when you come your high life over me,” rejoined her lord

and master ; “ you want to be wopped ; that ’s what you do.”

Here Julia betook herself to tears, and her husband resumed his pipe.

.. I now thought I might venture to mediate, and each party seemed willing to accept my interposition. Mr. Groves said he was all for peace and quietness, but his wife was enough to provoke a saint: Mrs. Groves maintained that she could bear anything but being treated with contempt, and complained that her husband had no regard for a woman in her situation.

“ Very well, my dear,” said he, “ have it your own way. I hate quarrelling.”

“ I ’m sure, so do I,” rejoined the lady ; “ but you began ; you damned me, and called me a jade—yes, a jade ; is that language to be used to your lawful wife, and the mother of your seven children, to damn her, and call her a jade ?”

“ But you provoked me to it.”

“ Come, sir,” said I, “ you must own you were a little too strong there ; as a gentleman,

you must be sorry for having been betrayed into such language."

"Well, I'm sorry for it," answered Groves; "I certainly don't know that she is one."

"And now, my dear Mrs. Groves," said I, "as Mr. G. has made such a handsome apology, let me use the privilege of an old friend, to advise you to think no more of this little difference."

"You know of old, Mr. Wiggins," cried Julia, snivelling, "that I'm of a very forgiving disposition, and hate bearing malice; and, though a man must be a brute that ever quarrels with me, I don't wish to keep up any more words, as Mr. Groves has seen his error. But Bill shall pay for the pots, that I'm determined."

To this condition her spouse made no resistance, and, taking out his watch, finished his liquor, observing that he had an engagement. He begged, however, that I would make myself comfortable, and, giving his wife a buss, left the room.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“Ан, Mr. Wiggins!” said Julia, when her husband was out of sight, “who ever could have thought that we should meet again under such circumstances. You have had a pretty specimen of my domestic felicity. And so you don’t think I’m much altered?”

She said this in an insinuating tone, throwing herself into an attitude, and gazing at me with revolting tenderness. I silently wondered that such an object could ever have been attractive in my eyes, and blessed my stars that kind Fortune had not smiled auspiciously on my passion. I could with difficulty bring myself to answer in a complimentary strain. I suppose she perceived the want of vital warmth in my flattery, for she proceeded, in a somewhat reproachful accent,

“ You used to think there was nothing like me, at one time ; but those days are all past and gone now.”

“ Don’t mention it, my dear friend ; we must think no more about that now.”

“ You don’t look a day older, and I think a handsomer man than you used to be.”

“ Hem ! you’re very good to say so,” replied I, confusedly ; for, indeed, I began to feel alarmed at the possible tendency of such conversation. “ But, my dear Mrs. Groves, I am all anxiety to know what you’ve been about since we parted at Lord Leighton’s ; tell me all about yourself, pray.”

Having ordered her servant-maid to bring tea, and prefaced her story with a deep sigh, she thus began :

“ Well, I must try and recollect. You know, of course, I was my lady’s confidant all through the affair with that Colonel Calloway ; I knew all their secrets from first to last ; I am sure that I did all that lay in my power to persuade her from it. ‘ My lady,’ says I, ‘ it ’s very wrong to do such

things; and though the Colonel will be a Earl at his uncle's death, and have three times my lord's fortune, a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. And then, my lady,' says I, 'consider, there's the loss of character, and without character you cannot go to Court, or to Almack's, or to the Duke of Devonshire's, or anything. At all events,' says I, 'don't think of going off with the Colonel; there can be no necessity for such a thing; my lord's always out, and never knows anything that's going on; and if he was to, I'm sure he wouldn't mind, so as there was no what d'ye-call-um—*'claircissement*. Many ladies,' says I, 'has their beaux, and their husbands don't mind it, as long as they goes on quiet and respectable,'—which you must know as well as me, Mr. Wiggins, having lived in high life;—however, my lady wouldn't be persuaded. 'There's my lord,' says she, 'entirely neglects me, and goes on intriguing with Mrs. Yates right under my very nose; but whatever I do, shall be done openly, I'm determined; and as my dear Colonel is ready to go off with me,' says she, 'no-

thing,' says she, 'shall stop me!' And to be sure, my lady, poor thing! was very much to be bepitied, for my lord's goings on was shameful, as I needn't tell you, Wiggins. And as my lady was a very good lady to me,—for she seldom wore a dress more than twice, and never did, like some mean folks who call themselves ladies do, sell their left-off things—I was, of course, bound in gratitude to stick to her interests. And after all it was only living abroad for a few years, and I thought I should like to see a little of foreign courts; and then, your being so strange to me about that time, and that odious Le Beau telling me he was a count in his own country, (stinking fellow!) and altogether, I was tempted to give into the thing, and we all eloped, as you know."

"I fear," said I, "from your manner of alluding to it, that the speculation didn't turn out well."

"The worst thing ever I done, as it happened," answered Julia: "nothing good ever comes of doing what is wrong, though, to be sure, I did it all for the best. However, we're

weak erring mortals. I 'm sure if I was to live over again, I 'd never mix myself up with such disgraceful things, was it ever so. We hadn't been at Paris many weeks before the Colonel had a letter from his uncle to say he was so displeased with his conduct that he meant to marry immediately in the hopes of having an heir of his own. The Colonel was sadly cut up by this news, and though he was obliged in honour to stand by my lady, he could hardly bear the sight of her in consequence ; and in less than a month's time my lady was so angry at his shameful treatment of her, after she had sacrificed everything for him, that she left his protection, and went off to Italy with a young chap, an ensign in the army, with nothing but his pay. I refused positive to be of the party in their flight. I tried all I could to save my poor lady from her 'fatuation. As soon as I saw what was going on, I went and told the Colonel in private, and I wrote a 'nonymous letter to the father of the young man ; but neither of 'em took any notice ; so the poor soul was

left to her fate. Between you and me, Wiggins, I don't think she could have been quite right in her head; for, would you believe it, at the very time when she took up with this ensign chap, there was the Duke of Devizes a-dying for her! He told me so his own self, and gave me a twenty pound-note, promising to make it a hundred if I could persuade my lady to be kind to him. But she would not have anything to do with him because he was an ugly old fellow. Did you ever hear such stuff? and I told her so pretty plainly. 'Ugly and old,' says I, 'what signifies that?' says I, 'a'n't he a Duke, with a matter of a hundred thousand a-year? Really it drives one mad to hear you talk such nonsense,' says I; 'it isn't like a sensible woman to talk in that way: the more uglier and older he is the more likelier are you to have it all your own way with him, if you know what you are about. Who knows,' says I, 'but he may make a Duchess of you when the divorce is granted? and at all events,' says I, 'it's far more respectabler living with a nobleman like the Duke of Devizes

than going about with a little puppy of a fellow not worth sixpence.' Bless your heart, she quite flew into a rage, and abused me for being free and impertinent. I wasn't going to stand that, you know, Wiggins, after all that had happened, so I just gave her a piece of my mind, and let her to know that I was an honest woman, and didn't ought to be spoke to in that way after all my faithful services. Then she burst out crying, and said she was the most miserable and degraded of human beings. 'It's all your own fault if you are,' says I; 'when the Duke ——.' 'Don't mention his odious name,' says she, 'I entreat you. I beg your pardon,' says she, 'for having spoken to you so sharply; I know I am no longer in a situation to use such a tone.' 'Don't name it, pray, my lady,' says I; 'I assure you I shall think no more of it; I am sure I never speak but for your ladyship's good, which I study morning, noon, and night, and that's why I want you to accept this brilliant offer.' But you might as well have talked to a stone wall; so finding this, I said no more, but took

my discharge, and left her to her fate. Many people in my place would have thought themselves very ill-used, and certainly it was rather hard upon me; for, besides giving up my London connection in going abroad, and running the risk of hurting my character by countenancing the elopement, I lost eighty pounds in good money, at the very least."

"You had, indeed, much to complain of," said I, as she paused to make the tea; "but I am anxious to hear how you disposed of M. Le Beau."

"Oh, the horrid monster! The same time that I left my lady, Colonel Calloway and he parted. I hated the creature; but in my forlorn situation in a strange country what could a poor, unprotected, inexperienced young girl do. I shan't repeat all the lies he told me in broken English to persuade me to become his wife, but the end was, he succeeded. You know, Wiggins, it was nobody's fault but your own. If you hadn't been led away that time in London by bad companions, I might at this moment have been your wife; you have them

to thank for losing me : how could I be expected to trust my matrimonial happiness to a man who was gambling and raking all over London. Well, I don't want to reproach you, or hurt your feelings more than is necessary, for I dare say you 're sorry enough for it now that it is too late. Heigho ! O dear me ! The course of true love never do run smooth, as the saying is ; otherwise you and I must have come together ; our tastes and feelings was all the same. Don't you recollect when you used to read those beautiful novels and poetry to me, and how I spoilt my lady's white satin slip that she was going to wear that night at Lady Woodbine's ball, while I was listening to that affecting story of the unhappy passion and seduction of the lovely Melinda St. Clair ?”

“I do indeed,” answered I ; “and that I presented you with a breadth of rich figured satin, to supply the place of the one that was spoiled, which circumstance indelibly fixed the incident in my memory.”

“Ah,” said Julia, “those was happy days ;

that was before you was corrupted by bad company ; your 'art was then mine and mine only. It was that O'Dienne that ruined you and blighted all my fondest 'opes."

Here she heaved a deep sigh, and seemed preparing to get up an hysteric, to avert which I hastily changed the subject. I recalled to her mind our performances in the fashionable line, our balls, our suppers, and exclusive coteries. She kindled at these reminiscences, alternately languishing, and inclining her head with the insolence of *haut ton*, as she did of yore, and anon describing by her gestures the evolutions of the mazy dance ; even as the broken-down hunter rears his crest, pricks up his ears, and neighs aloud, when from between the shafts of the dung-cart he hears the far cry of the hounds' well-known and welcome music, which awakens recollections of many a gallant chase where his triumphs were achieved ! In like manner, the sordid occupations in which she was now engaged had not deadened in the breast of Mrs. Groves the glories of former days. Banished from high life, and shorn of

all her grace and beauty, she still retained, amid the fumes of tobacco and heavy wet, a soul above pots !

I shall not tempt the patience of the gentle reader with any further details of Julia's history. Let it suffice that the result which might have been anticipated from her union with M. Le Beau very shortly took place. When he had lost what little money she brought him, at the gaming-table, he proposed that they should die together, which being positively declined on the part of the lady, he was compelled to relinquish this sociable scheme, and set out by himself in search of

“ That undiscovered country from whose bourne
No traveller returns.”

In fact, he threw himself into the Seine, and his joyful relict immediately returned to England, where her merits and misfortunes soon procured her a new situation, which she kept until her bosom was agitated by a passion for Mr. Groves, then coachman in the family, and a fine handsome man, she assured me, as anybody would wish to see. As a reciprocal feeling was acknow-

ledged by the coachman, their loves were quickly consecrated by matrimony, and they took a small road-side inn, from which they had only recently removed to their present house.

“It wasn’t the match I might have expected,” said Julia, “and I don’t think I should have married Groves, after all, if it hadn’t been for news that was brought me about you, which shocked me very much, though of course there was no truth in it. When I returned to England, I inquired immediately about you: for a long time I could hear nothing of what was become of you, until at last they told me, do do you know, that you was transported. I almost fainted away when I heard it; but in that case, as there was no hope of our ever meeting again, I thought I might as well marry Groves, especially after he had refused the housekeeper, with a fortune of a thousand pounds, and a very good-looking woman into the bargain, for my sake. From what I heard afterwards, however, I suspected it wasn’t you, but another man of the same name, that had been transported; though I declare my heart

came up in my mouth when I came plump up against you in the street. Do tell me the rights of it."

I explained to her that the real culprit was a brother of mine — my brother Bill, who, it will be recollected, had been sent abroad at the public expense for an unhappy propensity to irregular appropriation. Soon after my old friend had finished her story, Mr. Groves returned home, and being a sociable good-natured fellow, he pressed me to stay and have a bit of supper and a glass of something warm after. I accepted the invitation, and spent a very agreeable evening, during which Mr. and Mrs. Groves completely drowned their conjugal differences in a bowl of rum-punch, and I left them both in a state which, I am concerned to say, too clearly proved that there was at least one similarity of taste between them.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THIS incident gave a sad shock to the tender sentiment which, even after my best affections had been engaged to Miss Hooper, I still retained for the object of my first love. In what a ridiculous light did the romantic fancy which I had entertained for so many years now appear! What a contrast between the pretty, piquante little waiting-woman, and — shall I write the words? — the coarse, fat, drunken termagant, whose company I had just left, bored and disgusted! Yet a little reflection soon satisfied me that a calculation founded on common sense would have led to this result. My beloved Julia was, in her best days, a bit of a shrew, and time is not apt to improve the temper. I recalled, also, many instances of coarseness of ideas which had struck me amidst the

refinement of her manners. And as to her person, it required no conjuror to divine that a young lady of four feet and a half high, with an inclination to *embonpoint*, would, in maturer years, expand into a mass not very consistent with a civilized idea of beauty. Such, however, and similar to these are the illusions by which the happiness of half the wedded world is betrayed. A clean ankle, a bright eye—often mere youth and health are sufficient to captivate the fancy, and parties rush into matrimony without regard to any solid quality, to fall back upon ten years hence, when these charms shall have vanished or lost their novelty. Happily for me, cruel fate—as the cant of sentiment has it—prevented this consummation, and reserved my choice for a period when both head and heart would be more likely to concur in a matter, with which, at five-and-twenty, I believe it seldom happens that either the one or the other has much to do.

I was felicitating myself on the narrow escape I had had of investing my happiness in

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tened in the eyes of my benefactor were the more enviable.

What pity 'tis that the sons of wealth, who seek for happiness in the hell, the brothel, the kitchen, the cellar, and the stable, do not more frequently cultivate a taste for doing good to their fellow-creatures—a taste more simple, more permanent, more economical, and productive of the most exquisite enjoyment. No, ye G——s and C——s and L——s, not even the moment of triumph over female virtue, not the fruition of the *chef-d'œuvre* of an Ude, nor the victory of the nag upon which you have staked your fortune, can afford such bliss as a generous heart experiences in conferring a benefit upon a fellow-creature !

This appointment was a very considerable elevation in the social scale, for independently of its emolument, it brought along with it a weight and respectability which I had never before possessed. I had also the advantage of a field in which I might signalize my talent, for my predecessor had been dismissed on account of the business of the house having fallen off upon the circuit under his management.

I had, therefore, to repair the effects of his negligence or incapacity, and my success was half accomplished at starting—for I started with a determination to succeed.

I accommodated myself to my new situation with my usual facility, and acquired the practical details of my business with—if I may without vanity say so—my usual aptitude. I found it a very pleasant life, and if circumstances had not lately given my thoughts a domestic turn, I should have considered my career happily terminated in the lot of a commercial traveller. There are many of the materials for happiness in such a life—a good income—good cheer—good society and locomotion. But what are all these to a man whose mind is pre-occupied with the idea of a pretty girl and a jessamy cottage? Yet such is the perverse tendency of human nature never to be satisfied with the present condition, that were I in possession of the *domus et placeus uxor*, which I now sighed for, I could just imagine the possibility (not being a romantic youth, but a man of twenty years of worldly experience) that after a short

space, I might revert, with a sigh, to the careless freedom and comfort of the commercial room.

This period of my life was not very fertile in adventure; in fact, I was occupied in a sedulous attention to my business, and resolutely declined all the allurements of company and dissipation. My industrious endeavours were rewarded with success, and after a year's service, I had the satisfaction of being informed by the senior partner, that any doubts which he might have formerly entertained with respect to my conduct and qualifications were now completely removed, and that I had fully justified the urgent recommendation by which alone he had been induced to consent to my being placed upon the establishment. This praise afforded great exultation to Tibbetts, by whom it was doubtless advised to a certain quarter in due course.

Soon after, I had the inexpressible gratification of receiving a letter from my late venerable employer, congratulating me on the prosperous result of my lately adopted habits of industry

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evening that the measure had been decided upon. But I was somewhat amused at the emphasis and particularity of the written instruction which he sent me, and the solemnity of his concluding assurance, "that in entrusting this matter to my conduct, the firm placed implicit reliance on my talent and zeal;"—as if the real object of my mission was to gain the custom of a few petty tradesmen, instead of being a pretext got up by the junior partner to afford me a meeting with my beloved mistress.

CHAPTER XXV.

I WAS borne on the wings of love and hope to the pleasant little town of ——. On my arrival, I immediately despatched a note to Mr. Hooper, stating that I had come down there on business, and requesting to know when I might have the pleasure of waiting on him. My messenger brought back an answer that Mr. Hooper would be glad to see me at tea the same evening. I was received by the old gentleman with a frankness and cordiality highly flattering, and by the young lady with a flutter and embarrassment no less satisfactory to my feelings, for I interpreted this peculiarity in her manner as a certain symptom of the tender passion. Consequently, “my bosom’s lord sat lightly on its throne,” for I thought that my trials and disappointments were now certainly

at an end, and that if ever substantial prospects of happiness for the remainder of life opened upon man, those prospects now dawned upon me. I talked away, therefore, with my wonted confidence and fluency. My Mary (for I considered her as good as mine,) said little; but under the circumstances, I could not have wished her to be voluble; doubtless her feelings were too big for utterance. The conversation was sustained by Mr. Hooper and myself, and turned chiefly upon commercial matters, which the old gentleman considered the most interesting topic, as he esteemed an upright and successful tradesman the first character in society. His good opinion of me was materially enhanced by the information and zeal which I displayed on this subject, and he emphatically assured me it would be my own fault, if, in twenty years time, should my life be spared so long, I were not a man of substance. "In the course of nature," he added, "it is not probable that I shall witness your prosperity, but it is to be hoped that my child may, and I think I can venture to say, that

to none of your friends will it give more pleasure than to her.—Yes, my dear,” added Mr. Hooper, as his daughter blushing murmured something of assent to this undertaking on her part; “besides the good wishes you would naturally give to a young man who had served your father with integrity, you will feel interested in seeing your prediction verified.—You must know,” he proceeded, addressing himself to me, “that when I was disposed to judge you harshly, this young lady interceded in your behalf, and importuned me not to abandon to ruin a person who showed a capability for better things, and was, she felt convinced, far from being utterly depraved. I hope, therefore, my dear sir, you will justify an opinion, which I can assure you mainly induced me to regard the errors of your former life with indulgence.”

Miss Hooper blushed still deeper at this disclosure, and cast a half expostulatory glance at her father. For my part, I was so transported with this delightful, conclusive proof of her affection for me, and the intimation, thus point-

edly conveyed, of Mr. Hooper's approbation of my suit, that my diffidence and doubt were at once overcome ; nay, I thought I should be considered wanting in discernment, or, even, in alacrity, if I delayed a moment longer in making an avowal of my feelings. I cleared my throat accordingly, and had just entered on my preface, when I was interrupted by the untimely entrance of a visiter.

This unseasonable intruder was a genteel, good-looking fellow, about thirty. A tap at the door had alone announced his approach, and he walked into the room with a free and easy familiarity, which would belong to a member of the family circle. He shook hands with Mr. Hooper, and passing to his daughter, greeted her with a manner which seemed to imply tenderness and intimacy. He then honoured me with one of those who-the-devil-are-you looks, which free-born Britons may sometimes be observed to bestow upon strangers. His next proceeding, was to draw a chair close to Miss Hooper, seat himself therein, and ask her, in a low, soft voice, " how she got

on?" This, I thought, was pretty well for a man who was neither a brother nor a lover. But I could not discover that my Mary showed any mark of decided disgust at this sort of attention, and Mr. Hooper accosted him in a style which seemed, almost, to warrant such familiarity. He called him by his christian name, inquired after his father and mother, and asked him some questions, from which I collected that he was in the malt line. Mr. Hooper then named me to him, mentioning, at the same time, who I was. Mr. Charles Pennington acknowledged the introduction with a supercilious contraction of his eyelids, and a slight bend, which I returned, internally booking my new acquaintance for the most conceited, provincial, half-bred, insufferable cockcomb, I had ever encountered; a subject, in short, whom it would be a great luxury to kick.

The prospects of the barley harvest, and the probable amount of the hop duty in the ensuing year, having been sufficiently discussed, the con-

versation became rather monosyllabic, and the maltster looked as if he wished, and expected, that I should take my departure; an observation which I no sooner made than I resolved to outsit him, and, suspecting that his range of ideas was limited, I took up the talk, intending to astonish and overawe him by my knowledge of life and manners, and things in general. He challenged me in information, but soon found that he was over-paced, (as my friend Sweeting would have said,) and declined. He then tried me in argument, but here my superiority was still more manifest. He maintained his ground, however, with great pertinacity, until he had not a leg to stand upon, when Mr. Hooper interposed, and pronounced in my favour. At his decision, Mr. Pennington reddened to the temples with shame and anger; while Miss Mary, who evidently, though Heaven knew how or why, took some interest in this young man, affected to be absorbed in tea-making to hide her annoyance at her friend's discomfiture.

Mr. Pennington swallowed his souchong in silence and in haste, and then, rising somewhat abruptly, took his leave of the Hoopers with a degree of coldness and restraint, and of me, with a slight inclination, which partook more of insolence than courtesy. I remained master of the field, sipping the fragrant beverage with the utmost leisure and unconcern. But my triumph was alloyed by sensations and suspicions, connected with this good-looking, though illogical and disagreeable intruder, which I in vain tried to exclude. I became oppressed and silent. Miss Hooper sat playing abstractedly with her teaspoon, and a slight, low sigh escaped from her gentle bosom.

The old gentleman was the first to break an awkward silence, by wondering what could have made Charles Pennington take himself off so soon that night?

“Didn’t it strike you, my dear, that he went away rather suddenly? He generally is a tremendous fellow at tea, and I observed he only took one cup. Was anything the matter with him?”

Miss Hooper answered, she did not know, — she did not notice anything.

“ Well, then, I suppose it must have been my fancy ; unless it was, that he was upset by your getting the better of him in argument. Poor fellow, he certainly was quite in the wrong box, there, — ha ! ha ! ”

“ I should not imagine,” answered I, joining in the good-humoured laugh of the old gentleman, with an ill-natured sneer, which I could not, at the moment, suppress, “ I should not imagine that the young gentleman was ever much of an adept at argument.”

“ He is what is better,” returned Mr. Hooper, gravely, “ an adept at his business, and an industrious, worthy young man. I know no one more in the way of making money than Charles Pennington. I should not be surprised to see him a rich man, in a very few years.”

I submitted to this reproof, which I had deserved, and Mr. Hooper immediately resumed his former kindness. But the young lady continued discomposed, and I determined,

under all circumstances, to postpone my intended declaration until the morrow. Soon after, I made my bow, to the evident relief of Miss Hooper ; her father, however, dismissed me very kindly, and desired to see me daily, during my stay.

CHAPTER XXVI.

I RETURNED to my inn, with feelings very different from those which, I once thought, would have accompanied me to my pillow that night. The demon of jealousy had found access to my bosom. With the self-tormenting accuracy of a lover, I recollected, and dwelt upon every word and look which had passed between my mistress and the maltster, and the result was, the torturing conviction, that their correspondence was exceedingly suspicious. I then reviewed everything that had taken place between the young lady and myself, since the commencement of our acquaintance, and strictly examined all those indescribable passages, which I had interpreted as marks of preference and affection. By this scrutiny, some of the evi-

dence which I had previously received was rejected, much was diminished in force, and even proofs, which I had fondly considered conclusive, were reduced to strong presumptions. Nothing decisive had ever been said, or done, on either side ; and I could not disguise from myself, that it was just possible Miss Hooper might never have thought seriously of me as a husband. However, I resolved to endure this suspense no longer, but to come to an explanation the next day ; and, having thus decided, I finished my negus, called for slippers and a candle, and walked off to bed, where, contrary to the practice of love-lorn swains, I enjoyed a very sound sleep, disturbed only by a dream of a sanguinary pugilistic contest, between the late Duke of Gosport and the Hampshire Chicken.

At an early hour the following day I waited upon Mr. Hooper, and, having requested to speak to him alone, at once opened the business. I told him that I had insensibly formed an attachment to his daughter, and, before I permitted it irretrievably to affect my happi-

ness, I took the liberty of asking him whether he could encourage me to hope ?

“ I will treat you with the same candour and frankness which you have used towards me, Mr. Wiggins,” was the answer of my good old friend. “ Although I have every hope of you for the future, I cannot so far forget your past life as to feel that confidence in the stability of your character, which I should naturally wish to repose in the husband of my child. I will honestly tell you, that I should feel a great deal of regret if my daughter’s choice were to fix upon you,—I would even endeavour to dissuade her from it ; but, if she persevered, I should not carry my opposition beyond a certain point. According to my principle, a father is not justified in coercing the affections of his offspring, unless those affections were placed in a quarter where there were serious moral, or worldly objections. I cannot countenance any attempt, at present, to recommend yourself to my daughter. I am not aware that she entertains any feeling towards you, similar to those which you have, I am sure, sincerely expressed

for her : I hope she does not. But I have already possessed you of my sentiments on that head. This must be painful to your feelings, — I should not wish it otherwise. I would not have spoken thus to a man whom I believed to be deficient in either sense or feeling. I will now give you a further proof of my confidence in your honour, by imparting to you a secret, which could be revealed to none but a trusted friend. The young man whom you saw here last night is the person in whom I hope to find a son-in-law. He is, I have every reason to believe, warmly attached to Mary, and I do not see any probability of an objection on her part. Under these circumstances, my good friend, the only advice I can give you, is to dismiss the matter from your thoughts. Come, you will not die of love, I venture to predict ; you will one day console yourself with a rich widow, a Lady Tott, eh ? ”

I was too much mortified and dejected to reply, nor could I allow myself the satisfaction of feeling angry or ill-used, for the truth and good sense of Mr. Hooper’s objections were too pal-

pable, and his manner of extinguishing my hopes so kind and considerate, as to allay the irritation which would, naturally, arise from a proceeding so painful. I took my leave, therefore, without making any answer, nor did Mr. Hooper, though he pressed my hand warmly, make any effort to detain me.

From Mr. Hooper's house, I repaired to that of a party with whom I had business; and so much is man, if he chooses it, the creature of reason and self-control, that I entered as fully and effectually into this particular matter, as if my mind were occupied by nothing else. Many persons, situated as I then was, would have persuaded themselves that they were incapable of presently attending to the ordinary affairs of life, and that it argued insensibility to do so. Such is the importance of cultivating character, which alone can give coherence, vigour, and stability to the moral and intellectual qualities.

Having succeeded in the ostensible, though not the real object of my mission, and visited, according to my instructions, a few other adja-

cent places, I returned to London, and immediately communicated my disappointment to my friends in Doughty Street. I found, upon examination, that their anxiety to promote my wishes had, in some measure, coloured and exaggerated the circumstances upon which they had founded my chances of a happy result. Both Tibbetts and his lady expressed a great deal of gratuitous indignation on the subject, and even abused Mr. Hooper for a proud, strait-laced, formal old fellow, for making such a fuss about what was, after all, nothing more than a lark.

“I wouldn’t have stood it, if I had been you, Simon,” quoth Tibbetts, looking very big and resolute; “dash my wig! if I wouldn’t have snapped my fingers at the old fellow, and carried the girl off.”

“Go along with your nonsense!” said his spouse, with huge contempt; “you know you wouldn’t have done no such a thing. You talk of carrying girls off, indeed, spooney! you ought to be ashamed of yourself.”

“I only meant—”

“ You only meant,” interrupted Lady Tott,—
“ you don’t know what you meant, so drop it. Wiggins, I tell you what, I think you’re well out of this job. After all, what’s three thousand pounds, for a smart young fellow to go at? Now I’ve got an article in my eye, that would be just the thing for you, if it could be made a deal; none of your chits of girls, that don’t know their own minds, but a staid woman, come to years of understanding, her own missis, with a matter of seven hundred pounds a-year, besides some ready. What do you say to that, now?”

“ You don’t mean Mrs. Dolphin, lovey?”

“ Mrs. Dolphin, Mrs. Devil, — a flaunting, flareaway thing, who looks upon herself as a beauty, and makes eyes at the men like a kept madam. A pretty sort of a wife, indeed, to stick into a friend. No, I mean Mrs. Chapman, a very different sort of person.”

“ *She* sha’n’t be a beauty, and no mistake,” muttered Tibbetts, half aside.

“ And what do you know about beauties?” inquired his lady, by whom this remark was

overheard; "you're a beauty yourself, a'n't you? I say, Mrs. Chapman is what many people would call a fine-looking woman, quite good-looking enough for any man, I'm sure."

"She may be for a man, but I'm blessed if she is for a woman," said Tibbetta, in a low key, and somewhat sulkily.

"Oh, dear! how sharp we are all of a sudden; what's up with you then, eh?" inquired her ladyship.

"Why, because your down upon a fellow so."

"Then what do you talk of things you don't know nothing about, for? Nobody said she was a Venus of medicine; but what business is it of yours, pray?"

"I thought I might speak, though I know you're the grey mare."

The last part of this reply was meant to be inaudible, but, unluckily, reached the ears of Lady Tott, whose countenance immediately kindled.

"I desire, Tibbetts," said her ladyship, "you don't give me any of your low-lived, vulgar

slang. I'll have you to know, sir, that you've got to deal with a gentlewoman, you little whipper-snapper."

"Well, my darling little Totty, don't be savage; I didn't mean anything. I know you're as superior to me, as you are to the rest of your sex; so give us a kiss."

"Paws off, Pompey!" cried the lady, with a commanding voice and gesture, to repel the tender advances of her lord. "I wonder how much longer it will be, before I shall learn you manners. Come, now, you mind what you're at."

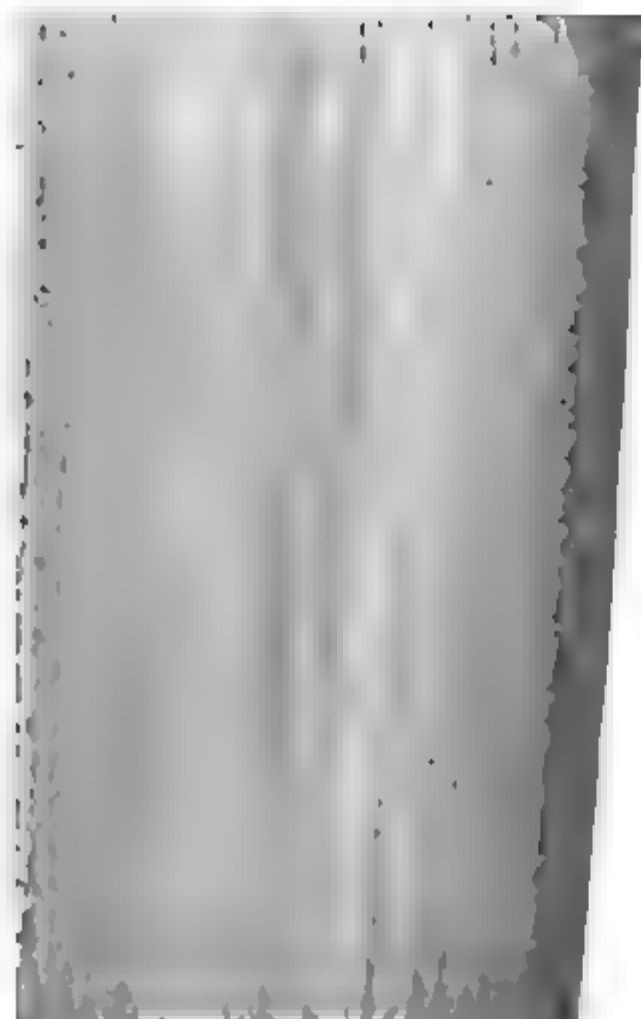
With this, she gave her lord a stern, significant look, and then, turning to me, resumed the subject of Mrs. Chapman, who, she thought, was not indisposed to re-enter the matrimonial state.

"She told me, the very last time I see her, that she believed she should be obliged to marry, for a protection against a growed-up son she's got, who wanted to bring her to beggary. He's one of your scamps of fashionables, you know, always a riding, and driving,

and junketting with the tip-top quality, and so dreadful proud, they tell me, he won't notice nobody under a honourable. However, this young chap is always bullying the old lady for rhino; if it was me, I'd soon show him the outside of my door; but it isn't everybody as have got sperret; and, between you and I, Wiggins, Mrs. Chapman is as soft as butter, full of nerves and hysterics, and a passel of stuff;—however, that's neither here nor there. They won't hurt you, you know. What do you say to it, eh?"

I fear the gentle reader will anticipate a prompt and decided negative to this design, and will be indignant that I should ever have cheated him, or her, out of any sympathy with my feelings for Miss Hooper, when I confess, that, so far from rejecting it, I thanked my good friend for this farther proof of her interest in my welfare, and at once accepted her proposal of introducing me to Mrs. Chapman. The contrary course would, doubtless, have been in accordance with the practice of heroes and heroines of romance, but very different from that of the

real men and women of this sordid world. All probability of possessing the object of my affections being now at an end, I humbly submit, that, in reconciling my mind to a mate, who could supply the absence of sentiment by more substantial, and, perhaps, (alas !) more permanent recommendations, I was only prepared to act, as many persons have done before me, without the slightest impeachment of their heads or hearts.



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and a solemn stare, which convinced me that she was, altogether, the most "awful" of her sex. When she spoke, it was with a deep voice that grated like harsh thunder. I cast a rueful glance at Tibbetts, who answered with a grimace, expressive of extreme distaste. I really, for some minutes, felt deprived of my natural confidence, and we sat down to dinner with constraint, which was, at length, dissipated by the repeated frowns, nods, winks, and gestures of Lady Tott, urging me to "come out," and do the agreeable to her guest. I first tried her with small talk, but soon found that this was a circulation in which she did not deal. I then offered her a heavier metal, which she returned with moral axioms and social reflections, relieving the pauses of this grave discourse, with Brobdignagian sighs, as if her bosom was oppressed with a load of care. By a great struggle, I assumed an appearance of delicate and tender sympathy with her mysterious woes, which very soon had the effect of making her disburden them.

"Few women," said she, in sepulchral accents,

“have gone through more trials than I have, or borne them with greater fortitude, which is the more surprising, for I am a female, sir, of the softest nature, and the most exquisite sensibilities. I may say, with truth, that I am a woman all over. In early childhood, sir, these eyes have shed tears at being the innocent cause of the death of a fly; and my real sorrows commenced in my fifteenth year, by the untimely death of a spaniel, which I had reared in my bosom; the animal, sir, was fondly attached to me, and I returned its affection. It was, for two years, and a little better than thirteen weeks, my constant companion by day, and the partner of my couch by night, and, ultimately, expired under circumstances peculiarly interesting and affecting,—it died, sir, in giving birth to eleven pups; for the animal, sir, was a female. This unfortunate event determined me, Mr. Wiggins, never again to have a female favourite. In consequence of that determination,—for, sir, I am of that disposition that I must always have something to love,—I bestowed my affections upon a

small boy, whom I selected for his promising talents, and open, ingenuous countenance. I fed him, sir ; I clothed him, I put him to school, but he shared the fate of everything I loved ; his life, sir, became forfeited to the laws of his country. He put my father's name to the foot of a five shilling stamp ; my father, sir, was a stern man, and, deaf to my tears and entreaties, prosecuted the unhappy youth ; his life was spared, but his young existence was paralysed ; his future became a blank — in a word, he was transported." Here Mrs. Chapman paused to use her handkerchief, and apply a pint bottle of salts to her nose. I threw in a suitable remark, and the lady, when she had recovered herself, thus resumed her melancholy tale.

" To enumerate all the misfortunes which I have encountered, sir, would be to weary your patience, and trespass too much upon your sympathy. In one little year I lost a sweet infant, a beautiful Angola cat, and the dearest, loveliest piping bullfinch that ever was. All went ; but I bore up wonderfully. The next trial

which happened to me, sir, was to see my first husband, Alderman Garbage, drop down in an apoplectic fit at his dinner, just after his third help of collared brawn. I shall never forget it if I was to live a hundred year ; my life was despaired of for four hours.

“ In a word, sir, my existence has been a succession of trials ; I have gone through them, but you see what they have left me ; my constitution is destroyed, the flesh is worn off my bones, I am a mere mass of nerves ; in fact, Mr. Wiggins, I ’m all to pieces, as you see.”

“ Law a mercy, Mrs. Chapman,” here interrupted Lady Tott, “ how you do go on ! why you ’re as hale and hearty a woman as I wish to see ; why don’t you take your glass as I do, and defy care.”

“ To be sure,” seconded Tibbetts, filling the widow a bumper of port, “ that ’s the way ; hang care, care killed a cat.”

The widow shook her sable locks, and slowly emptied her glass.

“ The doctors order me a bottle of wine a

day," said she, "but it is seldom I get beyond a pint. My cares are not to be drowned in wine." And she heaved another deep sigh, at the expiration of which, Lady Tott rose, and conducted the fair mourner to the drawing-room.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"It won't do, Tibbetts," said I, as soon as the door was closed.

"What, at no price?" asked my friend: "consider, old boy, there's seven hundred pounds per annum safe."

"So I do, but one might as well marry Gogmagog."

"She has buried three husbands for all that," rejoined Tibbetts. "However, I can't say a word, for I'm sure I couldn't have gone to church with such a coarse-headed one if it had been ever so. I say, I wasn't wrong when I said she wasn't going to be a charmer?"

"Nobody can doubt your taste, as far as the fair sex is concerned, after the choice you have made."

"And yet my little woman isn't what you'd

show for a regular beauty neither, at least I shouldn't ticket her as such. She isn't more than what you'd call comely like ; a good wearing handsome bit of stuff, but not first quality ; but, to my thinking, worth two of your fine flimsy articles which will neither wash nor wear. But now, how about Mrs. Chapman ? I wouldn't, if I was you, give it up all at once ; my lady will be quite vexed if you do ; and as to her being so desperate ordinary, after all, what's that ? I've heard say that a man do'sn't know or care whether his wife's handsome or ugly after a twelvemonth."

" Well, but," said I, " after having endured this probationary twelvemonth, the old lady might give up the ghost, and cheat me out of the well-earned fruits of my patience. According to her own account, she must be on her last legs."

" Don't you believe it. She's as tough as Herculy. Why, all that chaffing about dead puppy-dogs and bullfinches is only gammon. Didn't you see me wink at you ? Bless you, I know all about that. It's what the women

call sentimental: I know lots of 'em that go on just the same way, only not perhaps quite so strong; they put it on for effect, just as they would a feather or a flounce, you know. Why, some of 'em will pipe their eye about a dead donkey, or anything, and the more they pipe, the less they care. Don't tell me, I'm awake to all that. I suppose you think I know nothing about the fair sex. La bless you!"

"Well, but my good friend," replied I, "what a time one would have of it with a wife who was given to these sentimentals, as you call them. A virago, a drunkard, a—in fact, anything would be better than to have to do with one of these manufacturers of fancy grievances."

"I don't see how it could interfere with you," answered Tibbetts, "and it's a resource for your wife when you are busy, or engaged abroad. Poor soul! if you were to deprive her of her sentimental sorrows, she would be miserable in good earnest, and perhaps take to something worse. And if you could take the sentimental out, you can't put the sense in

their place ; so you wouldn't be any forwarder. Therefore, what would be the use ? However, as I said before, Simon, and I told my lady the same, I wouldn't attempt to bias anybody in the important business of matrimony. Consider, Simon," added my friend, lifting up his fore-finger impressively, and speaking in slow, but not very steady accents, " consider, it is an event upon which all your future happiness in this life, and in that which is to come, must irretrievably depend. My maxim is, that mutual affection is the only basis of connubial felicity. Therefore, my dear comrade, if you cannot give your 'art to Mrs. Chapman, do not give your 'and." Having thus delivered himself, he swallowed his wine, and leant back in his chair with the air of a man who had done his duty.

Though I cannot boast of the same singleness of mind and purpose which characterized my friend, I was really, I hope, incapable of sacrificing the happiness of another or my own on the altar of Mammon. I was not prepared, in cold blood, to make mercenary addresses

to any woman, and my morals were so far improved, that I must do myself the justice to say that I should not now, in similar circumstances, have repeated the line of conduct which I pursued with regard to Miss Griffin. Still, unattractive as Mrs. Chapman was, I did not feel myself called upon to renounce the speculation until I had ascertained that she was devoid of every quality upon which I could anchor my regard or esteem. I communicated this decision to my friend, who paid me an incoherent compliment upon the soundness of feeling, and delicacy of understanding, which it indicated. Soon afterwards, my worthy host's sentences became so involved, and his articulation so dense, that I proposed an adjournment to the ladies, and was occupied the remainder of the evening in listening to the detail of Mrs. Chapman's maternal trials and sorrows.

CHAPTER XXVII.

It required but little skill to recommend oneself to the good graces of Mrs. Chapman. A decent attention to her complaints, and an appearance of sympathy with her imaginary woes, sufficed to procure admittance to her favour. To attempt to reason her out of such folly would have been fruitless, since there were no materials for reason to work upon ; and as her indulgence in this delusion had not the effect, which it usually has, of enervating the real sensibilities, it hardly amounted to more than a venial weakness. I soon discovered that she was charitable and kind-hearted, but that her real affections were engrossed by her graceless son, whom she constantly abused, exposing his faults and vices to everybody who would listen to her.

“ Oh, Mr. Wiggins,” said she to me one day, when I was paying her a morning visit, “ if I had a hundred daughters, my prayer to them by night and by day would be, never to marry. You may take it, sir, as a moral truth, that children are, from their cradle upwards, a constant source of anxiety and trouble. I am sure if ever mother had reason to say so, I have. I never had but one, and he has been a torment to me from the hour of his birth. He was the loveliest creature, sir, that ever was seen, and I have observed—I do not know whether it has ever struck you, Mr. Wiggins—that those handsome men seldom or ever turn out well. He grew up wonderfully talented; his master assured me that he might be Lord Chancellor, or Archbishop of Canterbury if he chose, and advised me to put him into the law or the church. I sent him to Oxford, sir; but instead of minding his studies, he ran into all sorts of dissipation, and in two years cost me nearly three thousand pounds. You would hardly credit me, Mr. Wiggins, if I was to tell you all his extravagance and wickedness; but I have

proofs to produce." With this, Mrs. Chapman opened a desk, and drew therefrom two or three packets of papers, one of which she handed to me after looking at the label. I begged, however, to be excused entering into these details, telling her I had no doubt she had a great deal to complain of; but she pressed me to examine the proofs of what she had asserted, that I might be satisfied she had said no more than the truth, when she claimed to be the most unfortunate mother in the kingdom. Thus urged, I glanced slightly over the papers, which were for the most part, bills, receipts, and dunning letters of tradesmen, who foster the extravagance of young men of fortune and fashion. When I returned these documents, which presented nothing extraordinary, the good lady thrust another set into my hands. These were letters from good-natured persons and spies setting forth various irregularities and enormities of the young gentleman.

"Now," said the old lady, placing the third and last series before me, "there are written proofs in black and white of the ungrateful,

undutiful conduct which I have experienced from him in return for all my kindness. As nobody could believe it unless they witnessed it, with their own eyes, I make a point of showing these to all my acquaintance, that the world may judge whether I complain without just cause."

I was then obliged to look over some dozen epistles, which were certainly not very respectfully worded, considering the writer's relationship to the party to whom they were addressed; but seemed to me to denote rather the petulance of an impetuous youth who had never known the advantage of judicious culture and control, than the depravity of a vicious mind. It was evident that they had been provoked by the folly of his parent and the impertinent malice of her "friends." Mrs. Chapman, whose eyes had followed my countenance during the perusal, in expectation of seeing horror and indignation depicted therein, plainly evinced surprise and displeasure when I returned the packet with calm composure.

"Well, sir," said she, "I should be glad

to hear what you think of those afflicting letters?"

"As you ask my opinion, madam, I shall not hesitate to tell you that, however unbecoming those letters may be, I do not think you act wisely in preserving them, and certainly not like a kind and judicious parent in exposing them to your acquaintance. Your son has, doubtless, faults; but his faults seem to be those of his time of life, and of the society into which you have thrown him. From what you have told me of him, and from what I have read in his own handwriting, it does not appear that he has done anything dishonourable. I should likewise infer from these sources of information that he is a young man of a quick, but generous temper, who would willingly show you respect and affection if you would allow him to do so. You'll excuse me, my dear madam," I proceeded, repressing her by a motion of my hand, as she was about to interrupt me with violence — "you have pressed me, against my wish, to read these documents, and you have challenged my judgment upon

them ; therefore I expect, in fairness, that you will allow me to express my sentiments. I am quite persuaded, therefore, notwithstanding the many harsh things you have said and done with respect to this young gentleman, that you feel no real animosity towards him. On the contrary, I am perfectly convinced that you love him with the tenderest, most devoted affection, — that you are wrapped up in him."

Here Mrs. Chapman, who could no longer be restrained, disclaimed with great energy this imputation of excessive maternal affection. "So far from it," she said, "I can have no affection for such a wretch — I cast him off — I will never see him again. I own, Mr. Wiggins, I am surprised at you ; how any man of sense and feeling can defend such conduct ! But if you were a man of that sort, you would scorn to take part against a poor, unprotected, persecuted woman." Having thus spoken, the good lady became slightly hysterical, and applied the salts frequently to her nose. I took

no notice of her agitation, but quietly resumed the argument.

“Do you really suppose then, ma’am,” said I, “that it is the part of a man of sense or feeling to encourage you in your angry feelings against your offspring. Consider for a moment, consult your own understanding, and tell me whether a sincere friend would endeavour to set a mother against a child. What possible motive, except that which common sense and common feeling dictates, can I have for supporting your maternal feelings against what I am satisfied is a mere delusion. If I didn’t think so, be assured that I and every right-minded person must regard you in a very revolting light: if Mr. Chapman had been guilty of the most undutiful and vicious conduct, it would not justify you in abandoning him. But I beseech you to reflect calmly whether your son has done anything which you ought to consider unpardonable. Come, my good lady, let me beg you to descend from that bold eminence which you seem so desi-

ious to maintain, of being the most unfortunate and ill-used of womankind ; look around the world — nay, confine your contemplation to the narrow circle in which you yourself move — compare your condition, your trials and sorrows with those of your acquaintance, and learn from thence to cultivate with Christian thankfulness the opportunities of happiness which are afforded to you, and to be grateful that you are not, as other people are, victims of bodily infirmity—chilled by penury—broken in spirit—ay, and bowed down by the untimely loss of that staff to their declining years which you so wantonly and perversely cast away.”

“ I am sure,” whimpered the old lady, “ he was once my darling and delight, the most dutiful, affectionate——” and, unable to proceed, she burst into a passion of tears.

“ And pray,” said I, “ what has this beloved son done ? what enormities has he committed to forfeit such affection as yours ? I have heard of wretches robbing, and even striking their parents ; has he been guilty of any such acts ? ”

The old lady shook her head energetically, but continued to weep.

“At all events,” I proceeded, “you must be able to name some grave instances of filial impiety and general depravity to warrant this violent change in your feelings towards him.”

When she had sufficiently recovered herself, Mrs. Chapman, unable to escape from the urgency with which I pressed her to the point, proceeded to specify the causes of offence which her son had given her. These were, for the most part, trifling or ridiculous, and could have made no permanent impression, had it not been for the malignant complexion given them by the old woman’s gossips. Thus, having sent her son to a fashionable college in order “to make a gentleman and a great man of him,” as she phrased it, she was taught to interpret the almost natural consequence, namely, his incurring some debt, as a flagrant act of heartless ingratitude. Trivial acts of negligence and carelessness were, by the same interpretation, converted into studied contempt and proofs of the absence of affection ; while the impatience

sometimes elicited by querulous folly was construed into gratuitous insolence. The young man's real error and crime evidently lay in paying no attention to, or despising the hags and scandal-mongers who surrounded his mother; a conduct which provoked their spite and venom. I at length induced Mrs. Chapman to promise that she would, for the future, close her ears against such injurious insinuations respecting her son, and authorized me to communicate to him her wish for a reconciliation.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

I lost no time in setting about this labour of love, although I was not very sanguine as to the permanent effects of my good offices; Mrs. Chapman being one of those weak understandings which are incapable of receiving any strong or lasting impression.

Mrs. Chapman had not seen her son for some months, but maternal solicitude insensibly possessed the ascendancy over resentment; for she had made herself acquainted with his every movement since she had ceased to hold intercourse with him. She not only gave me his address, but minute directions how and when I was to communicate with him. She was very apprehensive lest his impatient and irritated spirit should prompt him to insult me at my first appearance, in which case she entreated that I would bear with him; and, for Heaven's

sake to avoid bloodshed. I could not help smiling at her alarms, and sought the encounter without any bodily fear.

I called about noon at Mr. Chapman's lodgings, and was told that he was not yet up. I repeated my visit at a later hour, and the servant-girl then informed me that he was gone out. As her hesitating manner satisfied me that this was not the truth, I told her as much, and desired her to give Mr. Chapman a card, upon which I had written that a person wished to speak with him on particular business, and could impart something to his advantage. The girl took the card up two pair of stairs; I followed her to the first landing, and overheard a voice in a loud, angry whisper, scold the servant for her stupidity, desire her to swear that the speaker was out, that his return was uncertain, and to get the person out of the house as soon as she could. Just as he delivered these instructions, I appeared before the young gentleman, who turned pale at the sight of me, but allowed me to enter his apartment without farther resistance.

“ Well, sir,” said he, “ I believe I can guess your business ; I have been expecting some such visiter for a long time.”

“ Indeed, sir : I assure you I sincerely regret the visit has been so long delayed.”

“ Give me none of your impertinence, if you please ; I am not obliged to submit to that, though I am to your authority.”

“ Nothing was farther from my thoughts than to be impertinent,” was my reply ; “ on the contrary, my meaning was courteous ; and as to the authority with which I am charged, I trust you will acknowledge it without any hostile reluctance.”

“ What the devil is the meaning of all this ?” inquired the youth, with marks of surprise and impatience. “ Are you an officer, sir, or are you not ?”

“ I beg to assure you, sir, I am neither an officer in his Majesty’s service, nor in that of the sheriff’s, if it is the latter which you refer to.”

“ I do, sir ; and as you are not an officer, I suppose you are a dun ; therefore, to save

trouble, I tell you at once that I cannot pay a fraction."

"You are mistaken in both conjectures; I come, Mr. Chapman, from your mother."

"From my mother!" he repeated, gazing at me with a countenance in which great surprise, somewhat dashed with concern, was depicted. "What is the matter? is she ill?"

I instantly relieved his fears upon this point, and proceeded to open my business, which he listened to, at first, with sullen attention, but as I proceeded, he could not conceal his emotion. When I had finished the eloquent and cogent reasoning with which I urged him to abandon his irregular habits, and bear with the caprice and infirmity of a parent whose whole affections were centred in him, the young man thanked me for my friendly interposition, but added, despondingly, that he feared his mother's anger would be revived when she should learn the state of his affairs. He informed me that he was in debt to the amount of several hundred pounds, that he was then almost destitute of resources, and, after a little hesitation, confessed

that he had been divided between seeking for subsistence in some sordid or disgraceful occupation, and making away with himself. I was, at first, disposed to feel a little contempt for the last part of this avowal, regarding it as the empty threat of a desperate debauchee, but, on a second consideration, its probability did not appear so remote. His circumstances, and the appearance of everything about him, were so miserable, that one might suppose an ill-regulated mind, so situated, to be weary of life. Tears sprang from his eyes soon after he had given utterance to these fearful thoughts, and his emaciated person, and spiritless countenance, denoted at once bodily and mental debility.

“ I don't wish to reproach my mother, sir,” said he, “ but I must say she is to blame for this. From my childhood, she was always either flattering or finding fault with me. She was constantly telling me, that I was so good-looking, genteel, and clever, there never was anything like me. I swallowed all these compliments easily enough, and, afterwards, it was

no wonder that I could not bear being told I was everything that was bad, and fit only to be brought up to some sordid trade, with which I was always threatened by her when she was angry. I was thus taught to fancy myself quite above the sphere in which I was born, and, when other young men, of my own standing, went out into the world, or were apprenticed to trades, I was sent to college, with an allowance of four hundred pounds a-year. I found it was not fashionable to read, so I hunted, and drank wine, and gambled, until I got into debt a cool thousand, and was rusticated for a frolic which I entered into with some tufts. I was plucked twice, and never took my degree, which I heard then, to my surprise and mortification, was owing to my inferiority in point of talent: I have since learnt, however, that my pretensions on this score were very ill-founded. I had sense enough to make this discovery pretty soon. I wish I could as easily have found out that my qualifications for fashionable society were equally slender. I was certainly a little daunt-

ed by finding that the tufts I knew at Oxford cut me when I met them in London, though they had drunk my wine, borrowed my money, and called me a good fellow at the former place. However, on the understanding that I had a large fortune, I got admission to some houses of a semi-fashionable character. Here I affected the libertine, and so blinded was I by self-conceit, that I did not readily perceive when I met with ridicule or repulse from the women. After a short time I was blown, and the son of the carcass-butcher was banished with scorn and derision, even from the third-rate circles to which he had found admittance. What could I do? I felt that I had no home, for my mother's caprice and peevishness made her house intolerable; she reproached me with my misfortunes and follies; I forgot myself, and retorted upon her; bitter words ensued, and we parted, as I thought, never to meet again. I am now cured of my delusions, and would gladly, if I had the opportunity, enter upon some respectable line of life, suited to my original station. In the

mean time, sir, I beg you will convey my duty to my mother, and, as you are evidently a gentleman who know how to express yourself, I am sure you will make my submission, and explain everything to her in proper terms, better than I can suggest."

I assured him that I would do so to the best of my ability; and I made such a representation to Mrs. Chapman, that, so far from feeling any resentment towards her unfortunate and destitute son, nothing but tenderness filled her bosom, and she instructed me to tell him that the past was forgotten, that his debts should be discharged, and that he should be received by her with open arms.

I had the pleasure of witnessing this reconciliation, which I had been mainly instrumental in bringing about. The old lady went about announcing herself as the happiest of human beings, and found her gossips almost as ready to chorus her revived praises of her son, as they had before been industrious in his detraction. But such is the way of the world, at least of the silly and servile female part of it, whose

chief occupation is discussing their neighbour's affairs, and who rather speak ill of them, not so much from particular malice, as in obedience to a propensity of human nature in its untutored state.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LADY TORT seemed disposed to think that I had acted unwisely in not using the influence which I had acquired with Mrs. Chapman to my own advantage. With her usual decision, she had adopted the prevalent opinion, that young Chapman was an irredeemable scamp, and, therefore, thought I had done his mother a disservice in reconciling her to him. But Tibbetts took a different view of the matter. He designated my conduct as highly disinterested and handsome, and supported his opinion with so much determination, that his spouse, albeit unaccustomed to defer to her lord's judgment, was at last brought to confess that it certainly was not what everybody would have done in my place. Encouraged by this indirect concurrence, Tibbetts ventured confi-

dently to prophesy that I should be rewarded for my magnanimity, as he had never known a good action fail, in some way or other, of redounding to the benefit of the doer. But Lady Tott demurred to this, saying, that it was all very fine talking, but, for her part, she saw too many knaves riding in their coaches, while honest men were walking in the mire, to believe that good conduct was certain of meeting with its reward in this life ; “for else,” she observed, “what merit would there be in it? If success and prosperity were sure to follow them as did right, a man would be a fool, more than a rascal, who did wrong:” which Tibbetts immediately agreed was a very true and sensible remark.

My good friends, being very desirous to see me settled, began to discuss the qualifications of other of their female acquaintances, but I begged them not to trouble themselves, as I was in no hurry to change my situation. But Lady Tott would not hear of this sort of indefinite procrastination ; she decided that I ought to marry, and took it upon herself to find me

a wife. I would not oppose her, as she liked to have her own way, though I felt no inclination to second her exertions in my behalf. The truth is, I did not find it so easy a matter to shake off my attachment to Miss Hooper; I found, in spite of all my efforts, that my mind would return to, and dwell upon her many attractive and amiable qualities, and I really felt alarmed lest my future happiness should be seriously impaired by this disappointment.

I was under the influence of much despondency, occasioned by these feelings, when returning from one of my journeys, after business had been settled, Tibbetts assumed a serious countenance, and told me he had a piece of intelligence to communicate, which I should be sorry to hear. I immediately guessed that it was Mary's marriage to which he alluded; I had been in daily expectation of hearing that it had taken place, and I had hardly breath to ask what had happened.

"It is about poor Hooper," answered Tibbetts, handing me a letter, which he took from

a private drawer. "I received this yesterday. I could not help thinking, when I read it, of what my lady said the other day, about goodness not being sure of its reward in this life. I am sure if any man deserved prosperity, it is Hooper. However, we know that a better and more lasting reward is in store for him, don't we, Simon?"

The letter was, indeed, a sad one; but I am ashamed to own, that selfishness so far prevailed, as to give me a sensation of joy, when I found that it did not contain the intelligence which I had feared. It was from Hooper, to acquaint Tibbetts that, in an evil hour, he had been induced, by the temptations held out, to invest the remnant of his daughter's fortune, in one of those joint-stock speculations, which were then afloat. The one in which he had taken shares had sunk to rise no more, the consequence of which was, that his child was left destitute. As there remained only the annuity of one hundred pounds which he received from his late creditors, it was necessary that his daughter should go into some employment,

which should offer her a maintenance after he was gone, and it was her wish, as well as his, that immediate measures should be taken to place her out in the world. Never having learned any fashionable accomplishments, she must seek for a livelihood by the work of her hands.

"You may, perhaps, feel somewhat surprised, my good sir," the letter proceeded. "that I should apply to you to aid me in this project, when there are other former connections, now in London, whom I have known longer, and more intimately than yourself. But I feel that there is none to whom I can more certainly look for good advice and zealous assistance. I should wish, if it were possible, to set up my poor child in some little business, which she would be able to manage after my superintendence is withdrawn. I will confess that this misfortune has so far staggered me, that I am not, just at present, able to collect my faculties to form a judgment on the subject. Do you, then, consult your friends, and your warm-hearted, sensible lady

Capital will, of course, be requisite to realize my idea of a business for Mary. It has occurred to me, therefore, under these circumstances, application might reasonably be made to the creditors of my late firm, who are indebted to my daughter's spontaneous generosity for being paid in full. Perhaps they would subscribe something, making up, say three or four hundred pounds, to set her up in business, taking such security as she can offer for the repayment of the loan. As they very handsomely declined, at first, to avail themselves of her generosity, I think she has a claim upon them, which they will cheerfully acknowledge, when the sum is, comparatively, so trifling. Pray see them on the subject, and let me know the result, when I will immediately come to London.

Believe me,

Faithfully yours,

D. HOOPER.

“ P. S. You will recollect that it was solely owing to Mr. Crossley's decided opposition, that the five thousand pounds advanced

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concern in consequence of this, for, of course, if he had come forward, there would be no occasion for the girl going out for a livelihood. That's a chap, now, that ought to be kicked from here into the middle of next week. I wish somebody would leave her a fortune, if it was only just to spite him."

Having given vent to his indignation in these terms against the mercenary lover, who, it was obvious, had proved faithless, Tibbetts hastened away to bestir himself about this matter, forthwith. When I next saw him, he was in high wrath and dudgeon. He had failed in extracting a sixpence from the creditors. One firm had said they were very sorry for Miss Hooper's misfortune, but the application was quite out of the course of business, and could not be listened to. The acting partner, in another house, after an effort of memory, recollected something about property having been given up by some relation under the bankruptcy of Hutchins and Hooper, but really times were bad, and the thing was out of the question. A third cre-

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payable half yearly. The delighted Tibbetts, with a profusion of thanks, reminded him that the sum named exceeded the estimate, of which one hundred pounds having been subscribed, probably the moiety of five hundred pounds would suffice. But the old gentleman replied that he would either advance the whole of the money required, or none, as there was no occasion to incur the expense of two securities for such a limited amount; and as to five hundred pounds being less than would be required, he did not believe a word of it.

CHAPTER XXX.

It remained only to procure an investment, which would meet Mr. Crossley's approbation. After some difficulty, this was found, and arrangements were finally made by which Miss Hooper was to become proprietress of a small and promising concern in the bookselling and fancy line, in a newly-established watering-place on the coast of Hampshire. Some months were, however, to elapse, before she entered upon possession, and Mr. Hooper, after some hesitation, accepted the pressing invitation of Lady Tott and her husband, for him and his daughter to pass the interval with them in London. No restrictions were to be imposed on my visits in Doughty Street during this period, her ladyship being satisfied that there could no longer be any fear of my renewing my suit to Miss

Hooper, now that her circumstances were so materially changed. She acknowledged to me, indeed, that her principal object in having that young lady at her house was to procure her a warm husband, which she thought would be a much better thing than a gimcrack shop at a trumpery watering-place. To this abstract proposition, I could not but assent, internally resolving, at the same time, that I would do all I could to prevent, in this case, its practical illustration. My heart was elated, and all my former hopes revived by the prospect which now opened to me. I soon ascertained that my rival Mr. Pennington, who had so meanly withdrawn his addresses under the pretended coercion of his father, when he found that Miss Hooper was stripped of her fortune, had never enjoyed her favour so much as that of her father. This Mr. Hooper himself admitted to me when we met in London, and as my suit was now freed from the suspicion of any mercenary motive, I asked my venerable friend's permission to renew it ; which request, he said, he would no longer refuse to concede, hoping

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" Well," said Lady Tott, " I wash my hands of the concern, mind; I had no finger in the pie; but mark my words, young man, you 'll be sorry you hadn't hearkened to my advice when you've got a dozen squeakers about you, and hardly bread to put into their mouths, that's all I've got to say."

Lady Tott was one of a very numerous class of well-meaning folks who will not allow people to be happy their own way. But finding that I was determined, she desisted from any attempt to dissuade me from my purpose, and endeavoured, as she expressed herself, to make the best of a bad business.

I was for some time doubtful about the successful issue of my endeavour to recommend myself to Miss Hooper. Reserved in manner, mild in character, and of a temper at once sensitive and reflecting, it was not merely a winning address and devoted assiduity that could engage her affections. Her education had been such as to develope her common

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pital to enable us to set up in a larger way. A very eligible opening in the clothing line offered, but the capital required exceeded that which I could command by about one thousand two hundred pounds. It occurred to me that this might afford a chance of a respectable employment to my *protégé*, young Chapman, and I proposed it to him. He embraced the offer with joy, and the old lady was induced to come down with the needful. In a few weeks' time, Messrs. Wiggins and Chapman figured in the trade list of the metropolis, and about the same period, I received the hand of one of the best of womankind at Marylebone church.

Thus, reader, did I bring to a fortunate conclusion my vicissitudes and adventures. My domestic happiness was secured ; and my worldly prosperity advanced by sure, though slow degrees. I could not help sometimes feeling with remorse that I was doing at forty what I ought to have been about at five-and-twenty, had I cultivated the opportunities which were

presented to me. My partner profited by my experience, and kept to his business with undeviating steadiness. His mother, with the caprice of a fool, would now taunt him with the humility of his station, when she was in the mood ; but Chapman would not suffer himself to be irritated, and in due time his patience was rewarded, for at the death of the old lady she bequeathed him the whole of her savings, amounting to between four and five thousand pounds. Upon this he married an amiable young woman, to whom he had been some time attached.

In the course of nine years four children were born to me, of whom three survived. In the tenth year of our union, my wife was left twenty thousand pounds by Mr. Crossley, the crabbed old creditor who had so resolutely availed himself of her generosity at the bankruptcy of her father. We had paid him off the five hundred pounds which he had advanced as soon as the profits of the concern enabled us to realize the money. This sum he left to me as a mark of his esteem for my character

as a man of business. The larger amount was left to the sole and separate disposal of my wife, and was bestowed "because such conduct as hers was entitled to be rewarded fourfold," for such was the quaint expression of the old gentleman. Mr. Hooper lived to see this gratifying mark of that just Providence on whom his humble, but firm reliance was ever placed. He departed soon after, full of years and virtues.

On this event, I retired from active business, retaining my share in the house only for one of my children. My eldest boy being, in the opinion of his parents, a prodigy of promise, was sent to a public school, with the view of afterwards being entered at the University, after taking high honours at which, it was settled that he should enter the Church, and ultimately adorn the Bench of Bishops by his piety, learning, and eloquence. He is at present incumbent of a good living in the North of England, and a fellow of Magdalen. My second boy is junior partner in the house of Wiggins, Chapman, and Wiggins, and my

third is serving her Majesty as a jolly reefer in the Mediterranean.

My friend Tibbetts attained, in due course of time, the highest civic honours, and presided in that chair before which he had once appeared in the most miserable circumstances to which honesty can be reduced. In his exalted fortunes he retained the same meekness of spirit and singleness of heart which had attended him in adversity. I had the honour of dining at Guildhall on the day of his entering upon office, and when the prime minister gave his lordship's health in terms of remarkable eulogy, he described him as a distinguished example of the triumph of integrity and industry over the discouragements of fortune.

THE END.

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